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Strengthening North American Security:

A Strategy to Engage Mexico

by

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## **Abstract**

North American security is indivisible. Yet, little progress has been made developing a collaborative partnership that provides a comprehensive, seamless defense for North America. A new strategy that strengthens tri-national institutions and builds trust through progressive cooperation is required to create the conditions necessary for full Mexican participation.

## Introduction

At the highest level of government, Canada, Mexico, and the United States are committed to a long-range vision to develop a new tri-national partnership. In a joint statement on November 30, 2004, President George W. Bush and Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin stated their intent to develop a “new partnership in North America (designed) to deepen our cooperation (and) continue close cooperation with Mexico.”<sup>1</sup> Going beyond the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), this “new partnership” will address more than just economic integration. Specifically, the partnership will “set an agenda designed to increase the security, prosperity, and quality of life of our citizens.”<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Mexican President Vicente Fox has made North American integration a priority since the start of his administration. In one of his first interviews, President Fox said,

(I have) an idea of a community as a partnership where we join forces, where you complement your economies and you work together for a common purpose. So moving in that direction would certainly make all three of us - Canada, the United States and Mexico - stronger. I'm talking about a community of North America, an integrated agreement of Canada and United States and Mexico in the long term, twenty, thirty, forty years from now.<sup>3</sup>

This commitment to develop a North American community is commendable, but not sufficient to turn this shared vision into reality.

Consensus among the top three leaders helps guide decisions and policy, but does not replace a strategy. This paper offers a politically feasible strategy to help energize relations with Mexico and identifies creative policy options to strengthen continental defense. The intent is to

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<sup>1</sup> Office of the Canadian Prime Minister, “Joint statement by Canada and the United States on common security, common prosperity: A New Partnership in North America,” 30 November 2004, <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news.asp?id=341>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Warner, “A Conversation with Vicente Fox,” 24 August 2000, [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/latin\\_america/july-dec00/fox\\_8-24.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/latin_america/july-dec00/fox_8-24.html).

offer a roadmap to help navigate political pitfalls with an emphasis on immediate steps NORAD / US NORTHCOM can pursue to strengthen aerospace defense, cover gaps, and improve planning. A discussion of options to strengthen continental defense cannot be adequately covered without a broader discussion of continental security. Continental security and defense are intimately intertwined.



# Chapter 1

## The Need to Strengthen Continental Security

*Geography has made us neighbors. History has made us friends.*

*Economics has made us partners, and necessity has made us allies.*

*Those whom God has so joined together, let no man put asunder.*

— John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Although President Kennedy's remarks in 1961 were directed at a Canadian audience, his quote increasingly applies to the entire North American continent. Canada, the United States, and Mexico are rapidly becoming an inseparable economic community. Despite this, progress to safeguard our interdependent prosperity has remained stagnant.

North American security cooperation has not kept pace with expanded economic integration. Since NAFTA was signed into law, trade with Mexico has increased more than 300%, skyrocketing to approximately \$250 billion a year.<sup>4</sup> In 1999, Mexico surpassed Japan to become the United States' second largest trading partner behind Canada.<sup>5</sup> The U.S.-Mexico border has become the busiest in the world; over one million people cross the border every day.<sup>6</sup> In contrast to ever increasing economic integration, the current continental security architecture excludes Mexico and is an ad hoc web born from a Cold War nuclear threat. The primary vehicle for continental defense cooperation, the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), is a US-Canadian partnership. On 9/11, NORAD's attention was oriented north to combat a Soviet missile and bomber threat. This posture proved grossly insufficient to defend

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Embassy in Mexico, <http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov/emenu.html> (accessed 16 March 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

against a transnational terrorist attack that originated from inside our borders. NORAD has since broadened its approach, accepting missions beyond its Cold War role. But, the bilateral nature of the charter limits its geographic focus. More attention needs to be paid to combating a southern avenue of attack. As we learned on 9/11, transnational terrorism and other threats to our vital interests can emerge from any direction.

Canada, Mexico, and the United States have an overriding national interest to “preserve, protect, and promote free trade as the best means of realizing developmental aspirations.”<sup>7</sup> Critical infrastructure, especially facilities like ports that speed the flow of trade or bottlenecks such as border crossing points, are inviting terror targets because of the potential to inflict large economic damage. Terrorism undermines the flow of goods, services, investment, and people across North America. As such, any future North American partnership must convincingly address concerns about terrorism. Inattention to security will not only render further integration impractical, but it could also undermine the gains that have already been achieved. In this sense, security considerations trump other issues.

Security is a prerequisite for trade. Although much of the post 9-11 emphasis on security has come from the United States, border closings and lengthy security inspections that slow commerce in response to real or perceived threats have had a serious impact on all three NAFTA partners. Enlightened self-interest dictates that both Canada and Mexico fully address security concerns, both to protect themselves and to avoid the repercussions of U.S. actions. Forty percent of Canada’s GNP comes from exports, of which 90% goes to the United States.<sup>8</sup> Since time is often critical, security delays at the border have serious economic impact. Recognizing

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> William Perry, Foreign Policy Research Institute, “U.S. Policy to Latin America,” 8 January 2001, <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/latin.20010419.perry.uspolicy.html>

the need to protect Mexico's access to U.S. markets, Mexican Foreign Minister Luis Ernesto Derbez commented, "The number one priority in our relationship is the fight against terrorism."<sup>9</sup> Despite Luis Derbez's comment, there have been no breakthrough agreements in continental security cooperation because the current piecemeal approach is not conducive to full Mexican participation. Mexico will only become a valued part of the continental defense team if it is given a voice in continental security decisions.

Continental security challenges cannot be adequately addressed unless attacked on a tri-national, comprehensive basis. Continental security is indivisible. Canada, Mexico, and the United States form a pluralistic security community, "a set of states whose major security perceptions and concerns are so interlinked that their national security problems cannot be reasonably analyzed or resolved apart from one another."<sup>10</sup> A new approach needs to be developed to protect against asymmetric threats across all domains, borders, and agencies. The ever-increasing volume of traffic between our three countries coupled with an enemy who actively searches for ways to exploit geographic seams makes the need to update security agreements urgent. A common hemispheric defense posture would help eliminate policy and geographic seams. Differences in national and foreign policy will persist. But, the establishment of a closer dialogue will help further diminish traditional barriers to cooperation.

Closer cooperation provides other mutual benefits.<sup>11</sup> Interoperability is built through peacetime engagement activities, including security assistance, armaments cooperation, internal training programs, and exercises. Engagement creates broad understanding of regional security

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<sup>8</sup> John Bailey, "Security Imperatives of North American Integration: Back to the Future of Hub and Spokes" (working paper, Georgetown University, May 2003).

<sup>9</sup> Center for International Policy, "Just the Facts: A civilian's guide to U.S. defense and security assistance in Latin America," <http://ciponline.org/facts/mx.htm> (updated 13 September 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Barry Buzan, "The Logic of Regional Security in the Post-Cold War World", in *The New Regionalism and the Future of Security and Development*, ed. A. Hettne et al (Macmillan, London, 2000).

issues from partner perspectives and enables better coordination of theater defense plans.

Coalition partners develop cooperative relationships to leverage resources through cost sharing and economies of scale. Early discussion supports joint development of common systems to meet common security requirements. Closer cooperation establishes a planning dialogue among counterparts, enhances access, and affords an opportunity to build influence through trust.

Enhanced tri-national defense and security agreements are essential to ensure our mutual societies continue to prosper in an environment where our citizens are, and feel, free and safe.<sup>12</sup> The homeland security imperative and associated mutual benefits should outweigh obstacles to updating agreements. Nonetheless, a successful engagement strategy must recognize different players in North America have different agendas, interests, history, and culture. A common hemispheric outlook will not emerge unless all stakeholders' concerns have been considered.

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<sup>11</sup> Mutual benefits taken directly from the Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs Guiding Principles (Pentagon handout, November 2004).

<sup>12</sup> NORAD's Bi-national Planning Group, "Interim Report on Canada and the United States Enhanced Military Cooperation," 13 October 04.

## Chapter 2

### Two Speeds of Cooperation

Continental security cooperation will proceed at two speeds. In other words, the pace of convergence between the United States and Canada will for a variety of reasons be more rapid than the pace of convergence between those two countries and Mexico.

Beyond a common language and culture, Canada and the United States share a long tradition of defense cooperation and substantially greater technical capacity. Starting with the establishment of the Permanent Joint Board of Defense in 1940, Canada has progressively solidified operational links with the United States. Preserving interoperability with U.S. forces and joint maneuvers remains a cornerstone of their defense policy.<sup>13</sup> Political disagreements persist, but Canada has “tended to embrace joint continental defense efforts with the United States.”<sup>14</sup> In general, Canada has adopted a “defense against help strategy”<sup>15</sup> by which it might “resist or object to U.S. initiatives, but ultimately it typically accepts and participates in them with the logic that ‘being on the inside’ gives them some influence on the exercise of U.S. power.”<sup>16</sup> Since 9/11, the Canadian government has moved aggressively to undertake bureaucratic reorganization necessary for coordinated counterterrorist operations. Canada and the United States are in the later stages of discussion to conclude a Common Defense & Security Agreement. The agreement will likely integrate naval forces under a bi-national command, expanding the NORAD charter.

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<sup>13</sup> John Bailey, “Security Imperatives of North American Integration: Back to the Future of Hub and Spokes” (working paper, Georgetown University, May 2003).

<sup>14</sup> Philippe Lagasse, “Northern Command and the Evolution of Canada-US Defense Relations,” *Canadian Military Journal*, Spring 2003.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. Canadian diplomat John W. Holmes coined the phrase “defense against help strategy” in 1982.

<sup>16</sup> John Bailey, “Security Imperatives of North American Integration: Back to the Future of Hub and Spokes” (working paper, Georgetown University, May 2003).

In contrast to Canada, Mexico has chosen to employ a different strategy in response to U.S. security initiatives. Mexico's historic approach to continental defense can be summarized as follows:

(Mexico has) followed a strategy of employing sovereignty as an anti-U.S. symbol that was useful to generate broad public support for the hegemonic party. The implication was to emphasize its independent foreign policy and to reject overt security cooperation. This deeply ingrained habit relegated topics of military and intelligence cooperation to the category of 'taboo' subjects for public debate.<sup>17</sup>

Historic Mexican resistance to overt security cooperation is a product of government policy borne out of a deep-rooted fear of encroachment from their larger, more powerful northern neighbor.

Mexican views are still shaded by U.S. intervention in Latin America going back to the U.S. War with Mexico, 1846-1848. Mexicans are particularly sensitive about territorial infringement because the U.S. military has repeatedly been used to take and occupy Mexican land. A Library of Congress Country Study of Mexico notes,

Bilateral relations with the United States have been strongly affected by the bitter legacy left by Mexico's loss of more than one-half of its territory in 1848 and subsequent incidents of United States infringement of its sovereignty. General Winfield Scott's 1847 siege of the capital, the United States Marines' 1914 occupation of Veracruz, and General Pershing's 1916 punitive expedition in northern Mexico against Pancho Villa were traumatic episodes in Mexican history.<sup>18</sup>

In response to Mexico's 1938 nationalization of oil companies, U.S. intervention "seemed likely,"<sup>19</sup> but tensions were overcome by the onset of World War II.

Museums in Mexico City document "skeletons in our closet."<sup>20</sup> In Chapultepec Park, a six-column monument dedicated to the "Niños Heroes" commemorates cadets who attempted to

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> "Mexico Defense Production," [http://www.photius.com/countries/mexico/national\\_security](http://www.photius.com/countries/mexico/national_security) (revised 27 March 2005).

<sup>19</sup> John Fisher, *Rough Guide to Mexico*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1 January 2002.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

defend “El Castillo” against an American invasion force. According to the story, the last six wrapped themselves in Mexican flags and flung themselves off a cliff rather than surrender (Picture 1).



**Picture 1** – “Niños Heroes,” Castillo de Chapultepec

Monuments and museum displays are not derogatory in nature, but serve as reminders of U.S. transgressions in the region. “Although these events are long forgotten by most U.S. citizens, they are still very vivid events in Mexican history.”<sup>21</sup> From this historical context, Mexican skepticism towards defense cooperation with the United States is understandable.

“Even today, people are wary of being taken advantage of by the gringos.”<sup>22</sup> Mexicans are wary of being lost in their northern neighbor's shadow and want to be treated as an equal partner. Mexican government policy reflects this popular sentiment when it comes to security cooperation with the United States. In addition to a historic reluctance to increase interaction, Mexico faces serious questions about institutional capacity and governance.

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<sup>21</sup> Holly Schroth and Jackie Ramirez, “The Mexican Venture” (Georgetown University Senior Executive Leadership course handout, October 04).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. The term “gringos” is a slightly derogative Mexican slang term used to describe foreigners, often reserved North Americans. The quote is not intended to offend, but is included to highlight cultural differences in perspectives, stereotypes, and biases. The Georgetown University handout was written for business leaders to provide insights into how to succeed in Mexico.

Mexican political, legal, administrative, and military institutions have not developed quickly enough to handle expanded cross-border trade.<sup>23</sup> “This gap has produced bribery and corruption, which can not be controlled by authorities.”<sup>24</sup> Bribery and corruption not only negatively affect social trust within Mexico, but they also negatively affect trust between potential coalition partners. The United States and Canada have been less willing to enter into security agreements when there has been a lack of trust. Inability to enforce security agreements and a simple lack of resources has slowed the negotiation of new continental security initiatives.

Military-to-military relations between the United States and Mexico remain “standoffish.”<sup>25</sup> Prior to 1995, relations with Mexico’s military were as described “virtually non-existent.”<sup>26</sup> In May 1995, Defense Secretary William Perry made the first-ever visit of a U.S. defense secretary to Mexico. Since that visit, Mexico has increased security collaboration with the U.S. through such agreements as the Northern Border Response Force, High Contact Level Group, and a Smart Borders initiative. But, the focus has been primarily on law enforcement addressing counter-drug issues. Military-to-military cooperation does not extend much beyond the United States providing spare parts for aging Mexican fighters. In an interview with the SAF/IA<sup>27</sup> country director for Mexico, she acknowledged, “There’s not a whole lot of mil-to-mil with Mexico on the agenda.”<sup>28</sup> Interoperability issues have complicated cooperative efforts.

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<sup>23</sup> Reyes Cuadrado, “Strengthening the institutional capacity anti-corruption,” 26 November 2002, [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/mexico/conf\\_en/pre/13.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/mexico/conf_en/pre/13.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Center for International Policy, “Just the Facts: A civilian’s guide to U.S. defense and security assistance in Latin America,” <http://ciponline.org/facts/mx.htm> (updated 13 September 2004).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> SAF/IA - Secretary of the Air Force International Affairs.

<sup>28</sup> SAF/IA country director for Mexico, interview by author, Pentagon, Washington DC, 16 Oct 04. The interviewee preferred to be identified by position title rather than name.



Interoperability issues are as important as politics when thinking through proposals for military forces to work together. Mexico's low-tech force is not interoperable with U.S. or Canadian forces. For example, Mexico's Air Force simply would not be able to operate within NORAD air packages. Tactics, techniques, procedures, and language are not compatible with U.S. or Canadian aircrew, nor have command and control procedures been developed. Barry Cooper, director of the Fraser Institute's Alberta office and professor of political science at the University of Calgary, points out:

Technical realities are at least as important as political ones regarding Mexico inside NORAD. Canada is struggling to maintain interoperability with U.S. forces. Mexico is a long way behind us. Additional training for Mexican forces might be the most Mexico can aspire to.<sup>29</sup>

Mexican air defense has few operational jets; the fighter force consists of 10 F-5s and 18 T-33s (Picture 2).<sup>30</sup>



**Picture 2 – Mexican Fighters (F-5 & T-33)**

Aircraft maintenance problems frequently overwhelm Mexican logistic capabilities. For example, Mexico was unable to fly any of its F-5s in 1998.<sup>31</sup> Total F-5 flight time rarely exceeds 60 hours per month. Given its current state, placing the Mexican fighter force under a NORAD command and control relationship would not add much value to a tri-national security partnership. Proposals to strengthen security agreements need to recognize the Mexican military won't be able to contribute much hardware to continental defense.

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<sup>29</sup> Barry Cooper, Fraser Institute, E-mail to author, 18 October 04.

<sup>30</sup> Center for International Policy, "Just the Facts: A civilian's guide to U.S. defense and security assistance in Latin America," <http://ciponline.org/facts/mx.htm> (updated 13 September 2004).

Fortunately, security involves more than just military hardware. Mexican sources of data and intelligence may prove invaluable. Commercial and military radars, drug enforcement airplanes, and Mexican Air Traffic data such as flight plans and aircrew/passenger manifests are just some of the assets and sources of information that are potentially available to bolster intelligence. Closer cooperation needs to be structured to tap these unique resources, while considering the political limits of increased interaction.

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<sup>31</sup> “Airpower Analysis Update,” *World Air Power Journal* (Winter 2000): 27.

## Chapter 3

### The Politics of Closer Cooperation

*Poor Mexico! So far from God, and so close to the United States.*

— Former Mexican President Porfirio Diaz

#### Political Constraints

Some organizations, political groups, and leaders are friendlier to the idea of increased defense cooperation than others. For example, President Fox sought to open a security dialogue with the United States after 9/11, but met stiff resistance from the Mexican Congress. The Mexican Congress even employed a constitutional provision to restrict him from traveling to the United States and Canada to prevent any such discussion.<sup>32</sup> After signing a new border agreement, representatives said it would “jeopardize territorial rights.”<sup>33</sup> The Mexican Congress has consistently criticized President Fox for advocating closer security cooperation with the United States.

The Mexican Congress’s opposition to closer military cooperation grows out of the public’s fear of loss of sovereignty and a fear of U.S. domination. As noted below in the CIA World Factbook, many Mexicans think of the United States as a threat rather than a protector or potential partner.

Even in the post-World War II era, most Mexicans viewed United States domination, not Soviet-Cuban designs in the Western Hemisphere or revolutionary regimes in Central America, as the major foreign threat to national sovereignty. Although fears of armed intervention by the United States have receded, concerns over United States economic and political penetration persist.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Joseph Nunez, “A 21st Century Architecture for the Americas,” Institute for National Security Studies, August 2002, <http://www.irpp.org/miscpubs/archive/nunez.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> <http://reference.allrefer.com/country-guide-study/mexico/mexico106.html> (accessed 16 March 2005).

Concerns over U.S. domination make any discussion of shared command responsibilities for a new continental defense partnership a non-starter. Mexicans are simply not willing to cede the sovereignty of command of their own troops to the United States.

The Mexican Congress has adamantly led the fight against any discussions of a shared continental defense command with the United States. The Mexican Congress “complained about joint military exercises with the United States that occurred without legislative approval (and) railed against the president for a plan that could have subjected the armed forces to foreign command.”<sup>35</sup> Joseph Nunez, a Professor in the Department of National Security and Strategy at the U.S. Army War College, makes the following assessment of the Mexican Congress:

The legislature is dominated by nationalistic representatives who are poorly informed about international affairs. The opposition takes a bit of truth and weaves it into a mysterious web of international intrigue. While the United States is deeply interested in having Canada and Mexico as security partners and integrated within the emerging Northern Command, there is nothing threatening to the sovereignty of Canada or Mexico through this cooperation. But most Mexican politicians see evil intent in anything Mexico City might do with Washington.<sup>36</sup>

Unlike the Mexican Congress, the Mexican military doesn’t necessarily view U.S. defense and foreign policy as having evil intent. Still, they are not willing to discuss any fusion of command.

The Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional (SEDENA), an organization that includes both the Mexican Army and Air Force, does not perceive a unified, bi-national command structure to be in its institutional interests. SEDENA remains an inward looking “closed institution.”<sup>37</sup> The center of power in SEDENA lies with Mexican Army leadership. The Army

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<sup>35</sup> Joseph Nunez, “A 21st Century Architecture for the Americas,” Institute for National Security Studies, August 2002, <http://www.irpp.org/miscpubs/archive/nunez.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> U.S. State Department officials (U.S. Embassy, Mexico City), interviews by author, Mexico City, 10 February 2005. Interviews were conducted in confidentiality, and the names of interviewees are withheld by mutual agreement.

“steam rolls”<sup>38</sup> the Air Force and has the final say over any initiatives. SEDENA is institutionally biased towards action only when threats have a direct ground-centric, impact inside Mexico’s borders. As such, a shared command with the United States that has an outlook beyond Mexican borders would not been seen as advancing SEDENA’s primary mandate, preserving internal stability within its borders.

SEDENA is organized to meet challenges to internal order and the existing political system.<sup>39</sup> They are constitutionally prohibited from most forms of deployments outside their border.

In the half-century following World War II, the Mexican armed forces have never been called upon to exercise an external defense role. Their primary mission has been to deter and prevent violence threatening public order, including outbreaks arising from strikes and protests, rural political grievances, guerrilla insurgency, and urban terrorism.<sup>40</sup>

“Mexico's principal national security concerns since 1910 (and hence, SEDENA’s primary concerns) have been to preserve domestic political stability and to prevent foreign economic domination.”<sup>41</sup> The Mexican Army is not committed to a grand continental defense vision that calls for a robust, comprehensive reaction force that seamlessly operates across borders. Working with U.S. and Canadian forces would overwhelm an underdeveloped command and control system and result in interoperability headaches. Additionally, allowing foreign troops within its exclusive domain (i.e., within Mexican borders) would be unthinkable.

An overriding military consideration for designing new initiatives is the fact that Mexican domestic politics will not allow U.S. troops to be permanently stationed on Mexican soil.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> <http://reference.allrefer.com/country-guide-study/mexico/mexico106.html> (accessed 16 March 2005).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

Mexico remains “deeply suspicious of foreign military forces on its territory.”<sup>42</sup> During a January 2004 summit with President Bush, Mexican President Fox adamantly denied reports U.S. agents were being allowed to operate on Mexican soil.

There's been no direct intervention of official personnel, policemen, agents; no direct participation in operations that have to do with the assurance of (Mexican security). What we do have is participation and an exchange of liaison personnel. We exchange information so as to do our work much better.

We reject any other sort of information, different information that has been brought about. That in this activities, well, we can state that only Mexican personnel participates here in Mexico. Thus, there is no intervention in the direct operation of any other official agent from abroad. It is the liaison officers that link offices.<sup>43</sup>

In addition to the suspicious eye of the public, Mexican law further limits the ability of foreign officials to operate on Mexican soil.

The Mexican constitution prohibits foreign soldiers from bearing arms on their soil. Going to absurd lengths to enforce this restriction, the Mexican Secretary of Defense turned down a request to honor a U.S. serviceman who died in Iraq with a 21-gun salute during funeral services in his Mexican hometown. During the burial, Mexican troops accosted U.S. Marines who hoisted an American flag and carried rifles that looked real, but could not be fired. To protect against the threat posed by two U.S. Marine pallbearers carrying fake rifles, the Mexican military responded with a 14-man contingent to ensure their territorial integrity was not violated. The Mexican military responded in force despite the U.S. Marines having “worked everything out beforehand”<sup>44</sup> with city officials. This small incident is indicative of communication problems between the U.S. and Mexican military throughout all organizational and bureaucratic levels.

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<sup>42</sup> CBS News, “Mexican Troops Disrupt GI Funeral,” 7 July 04, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/07/07/world/main628006.shtml>.

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Department of State, “President Bush, President Fox Meet with Reporters in Mexico,” 12 January 2004, <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/28116.htm>.

The Mexican military felt snubbed when the 2002 Unified Command Plan placed Mexico under U.S. Northern Command. The Mexican military perceived the move as a demotion in importance and prefers to deal directly with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, as it has always done.<sup>45</sup> In recent testimony to the Mexican Congress, Secretary of Defense General Clemente Vega Garcia firmly stated that Mexico will not participate in U.S. Northern Command operations or programs.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, Gen Vega stated U.S. Northern Command was created in response to 9/11 and has nothing to do with Mexico. At first glance, General Vega's testimony seems to be at odds with Foreign Minister Derbez's statement that fighting terrorism is the "number one priority"<sup>47</sup> in U.S.-Mexican relationship. But, General Vega's statements are aimed more at framing how he thinks the Mexican military will participate (i.e., not through U.S. Northern Command) in the global war on terror, and not necessarily an overarching refusal to cooperate with the U.S. General Vega's comments just acknowledge the political pressure the Mexican Congress exerts to prevent any working relationship with U.S. Northern Command.

Lastly, Mexico has a small defense budget. Spending slightly more than Singapore, Mexico ranks 21st on a list that compares gross defense expenditures.<sup>48</sup> It is not likely the Mexican Congress will increase the relatively small defense budget since there is no popular support for such a move. The Mexican military will continue to operate on a budget that relies on the United States to help defray the cost of military and police activities for the foreseeable

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<sup>44</sup> CBS News, "Mexican Troops Disrupt GI Funeral," 7 July 04, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/07/07/world/main628006.shtml>.

<sup>45</sup> Center for International Policy, "Just the Facts: A civilian's guide to U.S. defense and security assistance in Latin America," <http://ciponline.org/facts/mx.htm> (updated 13 September 2004).

<sup>46</sup> U.S. State Department officials (U.S. Embassy, Mexico City), interviews by author, Mexico City, 10 February 2005. Interviews were conducted in confidentiality, and the names of interviewees are withheld by mutual agreement.

<sup>47</sup> Center for International Policy, Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "World Factbook," <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mx.html> (updated 10 February 2005).

future. In 2004, the United States provided Mexico with an estimated \$54 million<sup>49</sup> in aid to help fund training, anti-narcotics operations, anti-terrorism exercises, and equipment. Mexican defense spending will likely remain at the same level as the average for Central American countries.<sup>50</sup>

### **Keys to Overcoming Political Constraints**

Fears over loss of sovereignty can be mitigated through a multi-lateral approach. Expanded security cooperation will be more politically palatable in Mexico to the extent that it is portrayed as tri-national cooperation for protection against common external threats, rather than bilateral defense cooperation with the United States. Making NORAD expansion a centerpiece of a U.S. engagement strategy would adhere to Mexico's preferred approach to negotiation.

Though much over simplified, Canada and Mexico prefer to address conflicts through multilateral negotiation, preferably in accord with international law and within existing international organizations. The United States, while not usually rejecting international law or organizations, typically opt for bilateral diplomacy and is more willing to employ coercion to pursue its interests.<sup>51</sup>

Focusing on a multi-lateral approach through NORAD expansion would lessen the political angst associated with direct Mexican cooperation with U.S. Northern Command. Defense cooperation through NORAD would preserve Mexico's ability to negotiate at the Secretary of Defense or Secretary of State level, rather than through the USNORTHCOM Combatant Commander.

Differentiating NORAD from U.S. Northern Command is as simple as inviting Mexicans to join forums that include Canadian participation. Mexico and Canada have a common interest in not ceding sovereignty to the United States. Canada has specifically structured its international agreements to preserve the command and control of its troops. No Canadian forces

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<sup>49</sup> Center for International Policy, Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> "Mexico Defense Production," [http://www.photius.com/countries/mexico/national\\_security](http://www.photius.com/countries/mexico/national_security) (revised 27 March 2005).



fall under the command of U.S. Northern Command. Despite having combined all but two staff functions, U.S. Northern Command and NORAD's command structures remain separate and distinct. Giving Mexico a seat at the table next to Canada will go a long way towards convincing Mexico that it will be given an equal voice in continental security without having to sacrifice command of its troops.

As a planning organization, NORAD can still work to improve collective continental responses to emergencies, disasters, and threats without requiring a unified, tri-national command structure. With respect to ground and naval domains, Canada and the U.S. have enjoyed longstanding cooperation despite those domains not being included in NORAD's charter. No permanent contingents of U.S. troops are required to be stationed in Canada, nor are armed U.S. troops allowed to cross the border without prior approval. Located in Colorado Springs, Colorado, NORAD's Headquarters brings Canadians to the United States for command and staff positions. An expanded NORAD would primarily involve Mexican troops traveling to the United States for training and exchange positions. This arrangement would be similar to other training opportunities for Mexicans already in place, such as the U.S. Army School of Americas, based in Fort Benning, Georgia. NORAD needs to push initiatives that align with and strengthen SEDENA's institutional interests.

The key to generate support from SEDENA's leadership is to advance proposals that strengthen its ability to respond to threats within its borders. Initiatives should be cheap and build on areas in which Mexico has previously demonstrated a willingness to cooperate. Despite being described as having an "ambivalent"<sup>52</sup> relation with the U.S. over hemispheric security,

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<sup>51</sup> John Bailey, "Security Imperatives of North American Integration: Back to the Future of Hub and Spokes" (working paper, Georgetown University, May 2003).

<sup>52</sup> Jorge Chabat, "Mexico and Hemispheric Security: An Ambivalent Relation" (presentation at the "Hemispheric Strategic Objectives for the Next Decade" conference, 17-19 March 04).

SEDENA has actively sought to bolster information exchange. Last year, the Mexican military requested and was granted access to U.S. Air Force weather information systems to include the Joint Army-Air Force Weather Information Network and the Air Force Combat Climatology Center. Beyond the tactical level, Vicente Fox's National Security Plan 2001-2006 emphasizes the necessity of "possessing sufficient, timely and reliable information to guarantee national security."<sup>53</sup> Jorge Chabat, a researcher at the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económica in Mexico City, concludes, "Mexico's security compromises will avoid the use of armed forces and will put emphasis on the exchange of information and intelligence collaboration."<sup>54</sup>

An emphasis on information exchange may prove fruitful since it will be able to attract more potential Mexican partners. SEDENA doesn't have a monopoly on security information. If SEDENA's bureaucratic inertia and inward looking perspective proves too difficult to overcome, the United States can still engage other Mexican institutions and government agencies to increase the volume and speed of information exchange among the three governments. A strategy that includes an inter-agency dimension would also avoid placing all hopes for success (i.e., improved relations) on SEDENA's willingness to cooperation.

SEDENA has shown a willingness to help police and patrol border areas. SEDENA's Plan Centinela (Sentinel Plan) has increased border area security to help prevent terrorist attacks. "The (Mexican) army and navy deployed 18,000 troops to patrol the U.S.-Mexico border and to protect strategic installations."<sup>55</sup> SEDENA's desire to protect border area critical infrastructure

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Center for International Policy, "Just the Facts: A civilian's guide to U.S. defense and security assistance in Latin America," <http://ciponline.org/facts/mx.htm> (updated 13 September 2004).

and recent focus on border security may “be a way to deepen the institutional relationship.”<sup>56</sup>

This may open the door for more collaborative planning between the United States and Mexico.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 4

### **Forging a New Vision for North American Security**

Literature attacking the subject of continental defense generally concludes that improving relations with Mexico is essential to continental security. For example, Lt Col DeMaso's excellent 2004 Air Force Fellow paper concludes, "Clearly there could be no better time than the present to embrace the potential contributions that Mexico brings to North American security."<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, he adds, "the U.S. and Canada must develop a long-term vision as to the role of Mexico in North America's security realm, and commit resources to enhancing Mexico's capabilities."<sup>58</sup> The analysis ends with a broad recommendation for a "homogenized armed and civil force that seamlessly integrates cross border duties and security obligations."<sup>59</sup> But, broad recommendations alone will not transform North American security architecture.

Recommendations for tri-national training and exercises may be key "ingredients for successful defense,"<sup>60</sup> but do not constitute a "long-term, fully-funded, incremental plan that enhances the collective strength of North American defense through the individual strengths of the member-nations."<sup>61</sup> The next step involves offering a vision, creating a strategy, and identifying actionable recommendations (see Chapter 5), laying out a roadmap for further integration that links the current security arrangement to a new partnership.

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<sup>57</sup> Bill DeMaso, "The Relationship Between Homeland Defense and Homeland Security: U.S. Northern Command's Rubik's Cube" (Air Force Fellows paper, Apr 04).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

## The Vision

Canada, Mexico, and the United States should seek to develop a collaborative partnership to construct a true North American security perimeter.<sup>62</sup> This perimeter would extend from Mexico's southern frontier to the Arctic Ocean. The goal should be to develop a common defense against shared continental threats and include a robust, inter-agency response capability to mitigate the effects of disasters and other emergencies. Anchored by overlapping interest and maturing respect, strategic cooperation should allow seamless operations across all domains (air, land, sea, and cyber).

The realities of politics will restrain a North American security partnership vision uninhibited by borders and bureaucracy. Regardless, certain guiding principles<sup>63</sup> should be established. Critical elements of this new vision include the need ...

- not to be bounded by domains (air, land, sea, and cyber);
- to be based on *need-to-share* rather than the *need-to-know* paradigm;
- to create synergy in all operational functions (sense, act, shield, sustain, and command);
- to be flexible, scalable, responsive, and inclusive of inter-agency dimension; and
- to preserve freedom of action (unilateral operations).

The end result of any initiative should be to improve tri-national response effectiveness, reduce risk, and improve efficiency.

Translating this vision into reality requires navigating the political pitfalls outlined in earlier chapters. Despite these challenge, it is still possible to craft an engagement strategy with Mexico that develops a new continental security partnership. This requires the United States to trash the current dual-bilateral approach and substitute a new strategy.

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<sup>62</sup> The term "perimeter" is not intended to convey a single barrier to entry or single protective shield. Rather, the idea is to create a North American security zone with coordinated defense-in-depth.

<sup>63</sup> NORAD's Bi-national Planning Group, "Future of Canada-U.S. Enhanced Military Cooperation" (draft presentation, October 2004).

## **The Current Approach is Inadequate**

The current dual-bilateral<sup>64</sup> negotiating approach has provided inadequate support for the emerging North American community. Virtually all the commissions that connect the three governments are dual-bilateral rather than trilateral. The approach works one issue, two countries at a time and as a result, has only made piecemeal progress advancing continental institutional and governance capacity. Top-level officials and policy experts describe the current approach as “reactive, haphazard, and inadequate.”<sup>65</sup> The unsystematic approach has resulted in “deadlock (and) left the relationship static.”<sup>66</sup> The dual-bilateral approach does not look beyond what is current politically and operationally feasible and offers no systematic plan to achieve the “shared strategic vision”<sup>67</sup> set forth by President George W. Bush and Mexican President Vicente Fox. Continuing with the current strategy will “keep the future of North America ill defined.”<sup>68</sup>

The dual-bilateral approach has not provided a vision or framework for North American integration because it does not adequately consider collective North American interests. By its very nature, a bilateral approach does not frame the agenda to consider the interests of parties absent from the discussions. As a result, the current approach will only produce an ad hoc web of security agreements as bilateral politics allow. A dual-bilateral approach simply will not produce a systematic plan to support an emerging North American community. Instead of recognizing that continental security is indivisible, the approach subjects progress to the whims

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<sup>64</sup> In other words, agreements are negotiated separately between the United States and Mexico and between the United States and Canada.

<sup>65</sup> CFR Beyond NAFTA Task Force meeting, New York, October 2004. Confidentiality of names is by mutual agreement.

<sup>66</sup> Robert Pastor, *Toward a North American Community: Lessons from the Old World for the New*, Institute for International Economics (Washington, DC: August 2001).

<sup>67</sup> John Bailey, “Security Imperatives of North American Integration: Back to the Future of Hub and Spokes” (working paper, Georgetown University, May 2003).

of opportunistic bilateral politics. Mexican bilateral politics with the United States is currently not receptive to transformational security proposals; therefore, the current approach has doomed continental security discussions.

Mexico's public opinion and new democratic political system is (currently) not prepared to engage issues of security cooperation at a level that could support wide-ranging, intrusive agreements that have become routine in the U.S.-Canadian case.<sup>69</sup>

Breaking this impasse requires a different strategy.

### **A Better Approach**

Altering the political calculus to break the deadlock requires a strategy that strengthens tri-national institutions and builds trust through progressive cooperation. Partnering with Canada would provide Mexico with a potential ally to offset and influence U.S. views that aren't politically supportable in Mexico. Mexico and Canada enjoy the same "European instincts and North American interests."<sup>70</sup> As opposed to dual bilateral talks that apply individual "pressure on Mexico and Canada to harmonize their domestic institutions and policies with their powerful common neighbor,"<sup>71</sup> tri-national forums alter discussions and the political agenda to consider collective continental interests. Expanding NORAD and other tri-national institutions is consistent with Mexico's preference for working through multi-lateral organizations to address foreign policy issues. A trilateral approach would also influence the U.S. approach to continental security.

Strengthening tri-national institutions would positively affect how U.S. policy is formulated and executed. Empowering tri-national institutions gives U.S. policy makers more

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<sup>68</sup> CFR Beyond NAFTA Task Force meeting, New York, October 04. Confidentiality of names is by mutual agreement.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Stacey Wilson-Forsberg, "Overcoming Obstacles on the Road to North American Integration: A View from Canada," Canadian Foundation for the Americas (November 2001).

options to respond to crisis and lessens U.S. temptation to act unilaterally. Invariably, unilateral U.S. action “infuriates its neighbors.”<sup>72</sup> Working through tri-national organizations will help systematically build continental consensus on proposed action and help reduce the need for unilateral U.S. action.<sup>73</sup> Tri-national organizations allow planners to consider the best way to employ all three countries’ assets. Planners have more resources and capabilities to respond to disasters, emergencies, and threats. Tri-national institutions also give the U.S. access to a larger pool of policy and operational expertise.

Strengthening tri-national organizations would preserve the historical memory of cooperation. “US foreign and civil service personnel (as well as military troops) are rotated so frequently that at any one time the career officers might be just as green as their new superiors.”<sup>74</sup> As a result, the government often “stumbles”<sup>75</sup> when a new administration takes office. Mexican and Canadian personnel assigned to tri-national institutions would help preserve continuity of expertise and allow a dialogue to be maintained between counterpart organizations.

Working together more would also help lessen the “complex set of fears and prejudices that lurk deep in the souls of the three countries.”<sup>76</sup> Increased interaction would help overcome anxieties that stem from “unknown language, unfamiliar culture, prejudice, or fear of domination because of size, power, or numbers.”<sup>77</sup> It may also help mitigate Mexican mistrust of U.S. defense policy. The key to changing the political dynamic and longstanding Mexican

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<sup>72</sup> Robert Pastor, *Toward a North American Community: Lessons from the Old World for the New*, Institute for International Economics (Washington, DC: August 01).

<sup>73</sup> A reduction in the need for unilateral action does not mean the United States should relinquish that option (see Guiding Principles in the “Vision” section of this report).

<sup>74</sup> Robert Pastor. Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.



sensitivities about security cooperation with the United States is to build trust through progressive cooperation.

Strengthening tri-national institutions won't transform continental security cooperation overnight. The United States must actively promote measures to build trust. Trust is a pre-requisite for effective, tri-national operations. Mutual trust provides the glue that binds together forces with different operating procedures, customs, and culture. Trust provides the foundation for organizations to work together. During his January 2004 summit with President Bush, President Fox identified mutual trust as the preeminent contributing factor responsible for recent law enforcement successes.

We exchange information the way we agreed upon with President Bush since the beginning of our conversations in Rancho San Cristobal. And we have a mutual trust -- that's the way we started -- so that the security and safety institutions would trust each other. They could have an exchange of information and they could be very, very efficient in their work. Never, never before had we reached efficiency level fighting organized crime, guaranteeing the security and safety of the different passengers, stopping, let's say, loads of drug, drug trafficking the way we have been achieving this in the last few years, based upon mutual trust and based on this coordinated work between the two parts.<sup>78</sup>

Trust developed between police intelligence units fighting the drug war developed over years of working together. President Fox's new team of law enforcement officials didn't enjoy instant credibility. To overcome the legacy of senior Mexican officials selling sensitive intelligence to drug traffickers, President Fox's new team had to "show themselves worthy of being trusted."<sup>79</sup> Similar trust between security and military forces cannot be developed if they remain insulated in their barracks. Building trust is a slow process that involves progressive cooperation and interaction. As President Fox noted, time and effort invested devoted to building trust can pay huge dividends.

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<sup>78</sup> U.S. Department of State, "President Bush, President Fox Meet with Reporters in Mexico," 12 January 2004, <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/28116.htm>.

## **The End Result – Better Policy**

A strategy that strengthens tri-national institutions and builds trust through progressive cooperation will diminish obstacles to forging a grander continental defense vision. Canada, Mexico, and the United States depend on each other for solutions to complex transnational problems. Dr. Robert Pastor, a former director of Latin American affairs on the National Security Council, asserts, “Geographical proximity, shared democratic values, and open market economies warrant greater trilateral consultation and cooperation on policy issues.”<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, he adds, “Through joint approaches, the three countries will find it easier to devise more effective policies and more genuine partnerships.”<sup>81</sup> Although differences of opinion will remain, strengthening tri-national institutions and actively seeking to build trust will accelerate consensus on the future of North America and provide a forum for discussion. The end result should be better policy and more effective operations.

A strategy that strengthens tri-national institutions will approach policy and operations from a collective perspective. “The policies that emerge from trying to incorporate the interests of all three countries are likely to be fairer and more effective than if each government acts alone.”<sup>82</sup> Success in building trust will help smooth tensions arising from asymmetries of size, wealth, and power. “To the extent that the three governments employ their distinct perspectives, but think like North Americans, they will be more likely to locate a fair and reciprocal policy.”<sup>83</sup> Transitioning to a tri-national approach will focus efforts on building a tri-national institutional capacity rather than just making opportunistic strides as politics allow.

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<sup>79</sup> Robert Pastor. Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Stacey Wilson-Forsberg. Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Robert Pastor. Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

Better tri-national cooperation would also improve collective continental response capabilities. Tri-lateralizing institutions would allow Canada, Mexico, and the United States to build joint plans and coordinate responses to emergencies, disasters, and threats using the resources of all three countries in a supportive manner.

## Chapter 5

### Recommendations

*Our task now is not to fix the blame for the past, but to fix the course for the future.*

– John Fitzgerald Kennedy

The ten recommendations listed below serve to strengthen tri-national security institutions and build trust through progressive cooperation. Some of the recommendations involve U.S.-Mexico exchanges or programs and exclude a discussion of similar Canadian programs, which are no less important.

Half of the recommendations (1-5) focus on architecture (i.e., organizations and forums). The remainder (6-10) suggests improvements in personnel exchanges and operations (6-10).

#### **1. Expand NORAD to include Mexico**

*Note: Expanding NORAD to include Mexico is this paper's most important recommendation.*

*NORAD is currently the primary vehicle for continental defense. Without a plan to create conditions for full Mexican participation in North American security architecture, improvements will remain marginal. As such, an expanded discussion of this recommendation, titled "The Way Ahead for NORAD," is provided in Chapter 6. Policy options to help expand NORAD to include Mexico are also of keen interest to this paper's sponsor, USNORTHCOM / NORAD.*

NORAD's mission is to provide aerospace warning and control for the North American continent, but Mexican participation is conspicuously absent from that partnership. NORAD remains exclusively a Canadian-U.S. venture. NORAD has yet to consult Mexico or cultivate relations with Mexico to develop a common vision to deter, detect, and defeat threats to our

shared North American homeland. Expanding NORAD to include Mexico would strengthen the collective defense of North America.

Including Mexico in NORAD would provide immediate gains in response capabilities, in addition to strengthening tri-national relations through improved planning. It would continue NORAD's transformation from a Cold War institution, facing north to combat a Soviet missile and bomber threat, into a true continental homeland defense organization. Changes made as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks shouldn't end with the integration of additional air traffic radars oriented inward.

The first lesson learned on 9/11 was that NORAD was errantly postured outwardly, literally turning a blind eye to the threat from within. And the first corrective action taken was to integrate the FAA's internal radars into NORAD's air picture.<sup>84</sup>

Expanding our interior radar coverage was a good start. NORAD still needs to strengthen radar coverage and defenses on our southern flank.

NORAD's 2020 Vision document envisions expansion to include Mexico, but does not offer a strategy to accomplish this vision. Entering tri-national negotiations to jump immediately to a structure similar to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is simply not politically feasible. Eventually, NORAD may form the backbone of a new partnership structure that provides command and control for an Integrated North American Force to "raise the overall readiness and security of disparate nations."<sup>85</sup> But, North American politics are a long way from pushing for the establishment of a unified, tri-national defense force. Presently, the United States is not willing to share the costs of and responsibility for defending Mexican airspace. Despite a consensus that improved cooperation with Mexico is vital to North American security, the details of that cooperation remain to be worked out.

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<sup>84</sup> "Defining Homeland Defense" (HQ AF/XOH handout), AF Fellows Orientation Program: Pentagon, Jul 04.

The final form of North American defense cooperation is not clear. From a military doctrine perspective, a tri-national command structure offers promising gains in synergies due to unity of command and unity of effort. But, political realities and interoperability challenges complicate command structure discussions. The realities of current Mexican and U.S. politics would kill any NORAD-proposed grand plan, so any new long-term partnership will have to develop from modest initiatives to improve cooperation.

An engagement strategy that focuses on information sharing and collaborative planning would be a good first step in creating a new defense partnership with Mexico. Specifically, the United States should do the following:

- Integrate Mexican civil & military radars into a common operating picture;
- Invite Mexico to participate in the North American Aerospace Surveillance Council;<sup>86</sup> and
- Invite Mexican exchange officer(s) to observe and/or participate in NORAD's Bi-national Planning Group.

Implementing these three steps would immediately improve relations and strengthen NORAD's capability while avoiding the pitfalls of North American politics.<sup>87</sup> Integrating Mexican civil and military radars into a common air picture would reduce coverage gaps<sup>88</sup> identified in the North American Air Surveillance Plan. Extending our situational awareness deep into Mexican territory would satisfy an identified NORAD air defense shortfall<sup>89</sup> and give us more time to detect, assess, and engage threats to continental security from a southern avenue of attack. Improving collaborative planning with Mexico would strengthen both our and their ability to respond to threats, natural disasters, and/or other emergencies. Establishing liaison links within NORAD working groups would allow U.S. planners to start a direct dialogue with Mexican

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<sup>85</sup> Bill DeMaso. Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> To be renamed the Wide Area Surveillance Council (WASC).

<sup>87</sup> More details are discussed in Chapter 6.

<sup>88</sup> Radar coverage gaps are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

<sup>89</sup> The specific air defense shortfall is discussed in Chapter 6.

counterparts. Giving Mexico a voice in the North American Air Surveillance Council and Bi-national Planning Group would build trust and pave the way for improved relations.

Progressive Mexican cooperation with NORAD will help establish a working relationship necessary to create conditions for a true continental defense partnership. Albeit small at first, the recommendations listed above will give Mexico a voice in continental defense acting through NORAD. This will start to lay the groundwork for an integrated, tri-national approach<sup>90</sup> to North American security. Ideally, improved cooperation will ultimately lead to a formal expansion of the NORAD charter to include Mexico as a full partner.

## **2. Develop systems and architecture to accelerate tri-national information sharing.**

When we talk about intelligence, we usually think about our undercover operatives overseas and what they can get that would help us to know what terrorists are planning. It is important to have that kind of international cooperation for sheer intelligence, but it's also important to have that kind of international cooperation for the sharing of information. And that's what my focus has been because it's information that will help us to stop terrorist travel, and to identify it, to intersect it, and make it more difficult for them to cross international boundary lines.

*Asa Hutchinson  
Undersecretary, Border and Transportation Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security*

Canada, Mexico, and the United States should establish an information sharing architecture that offers a decentralized, distributed system. Ideally, this tri-national system would consolidate the hodgepodge of national systems. The goal would be to share terrorism, border security, law enforcement, customs, and commerce information in a manner consistent with national security and the protection of privacy and civil liberties. Beyond exchanging air traffic and radar data, other ways to improve information sharing include:

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<sup>90</sup> A tri-national approach to North American security does not necessarily require the Mexican military to cede command & control of troops to the United States.

- Creating a common law enforcement database (e.g., criminal background checks, digitized finger print collections, firearm ballistic tables, hazardous material information, etc.);
- Devising protocols for the rapid exchange of biometric information among law enforcement agencies; and
- Creating a common exclusion lists to deny entry into Canada, Mexico, and/or the United States for suspected terrorists

A tri-national initiative should be pursued to change the current *need-to-know* rules with a *need-to-share* culture of integration. The effective use of information from all available sources is essential to fight against terror and for the protection of our shared North American homeland. As noted in the 9/11 Commission Report, “The biggest impediment to all-source analysis, and to a greater likelihood of ‘connecting the dots,’ is resistance to sharing information.”<sup>91</sup> Increased information sharing also brings an additional responsibility to ensure civil liberties are not infringed.

Canada, Mexico, and the United States are democracies, and all three countries place a premium on civil liberties. North American governments must take care to balance their newfound emphasis on security with longstanding liberal-democratic traditions. Perceived violations of legal protections in the name of cooperation against terrorism have provoked public consternation, and failure to take such complaints seriously could jeopardize security cooperation in the future.

### **3. Invite Mexico to participate in the Permanent Joint Board on Defense.**

The United States and Canada should invite Mexico to participate in the Permanent Joint Board on Defense (PJBD). The PJBD is the senior advisory body on continental defense. The Canadian Department of National Defence recognizes its value as an “alternate channel of communication, one through which the resolution of difficult issues has been expedited. In

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<sup>91</sup> 9/11 Commission Report Implementation Act of 2004, September 2004, <http://www.theorator.com/bills108/s2774.html>.



particular, it has helped devise imaginative solutions to the types of problems encountered by both countries, such as cost-sharing in an era of declining budgets.”<sup>92</sup> Including Mexico in PJBD discussions would help “develop and integrate interoperability benchmarks into the design and implementation of the Army, Navy and Air Forces of Tomorrow”<sup>93</sup> as well as help “identify areas of cooperation to defend against asymmetric threats and protect critical North American infrastructure.”<sup>94</sup>

Canada has shown a recent interest in improving relations with its hemispheric partners and in enhancing Canada’s contribution to hemispheric defense.<sup>95</sup> Canada joined the Inter-American Defence Board in 2002 and sent a delegate to the Board’s headquarters in Washington, DC.<sup>96</sup> Extending an invitation to Mexico to join the PJBD would nicely compliment Canadian policy to engage hemispheric partners.

#### **4. Establish tri-national planning forums and mechanisms to streamline bureaucracy.**

A new tri-national planning organization should be tasked with the following responsibilities.<sup>97</sup>

- *Preparing contingency plans to ensure a cooperative and well-coordinated response to national requests for military assistance in the event of a threat, attack, or civil emergency;*
- *Coordinating maritime surveillance and intelligence sharing to enhance our overall awareness of potential maritime threats;*
- *Assessing maritime threats, incidents, and emergencies and advising the three governments;*
- *Establishing appropriate planning and liaison mechanisms with civilian authorities involved in crisis response, such as police, fire fighters and other first responders;*
- *Designing and participating in exercises;*

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<sup>92</sup> Canadian Forces, “Backgrounder: The Permanent Joint Board on Defence,” 11 October 2001, [http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/newsroom/view\\_news\\_e.asp?id=298](http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=298).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Canadian Department of National Defence (19 Nov 02 statement), <http://www.forces.gc.ca>.

<sup>96</sup> “Canada Joins the Inter-American Defence Board,” 20 November 2004, <http://www.defense-aerospace.com>.

<sup>97</sup> Note: these are the same roles and responsibilities as the Bi-national Planning Group except extended on a tri-national basis. (<http://www.canadianally.com/ca/nasec/bnpg-en.asp>)

- *Conducting joint training programs; and*
- *Validating the practicality and effectiveness of plans prior to their approval.*

The objective should be to work out the “details of a coordinated response in advance of a potential crisis.”<sup>98</sup>

Staffing operational planners from SEDENA in this new tri-national organization is essential since they function as the primary first responders within Mexican borders. The Mexican military performs this role since police and law enforcement agencies lack the institutional capacity to respond to large disasters and/or civil emergencies.

#### **5. Encourage regular consultation, joint contingency planning, and joint training among first responders in border regions.**

Sending humanitarian assistance provided by Mexico for the Asian tsunami victims on a U.S. Navy vessel demonstrates the high degree of cooperation between our nations when disaster strikes, as we are all part of humanity, all affected by this tragedy.<sup>99</sup>

*U.S. Ambassador Tony Garza*

In January 2005, Mexico and the United States worked together to provide humanitarian relief to those nations affected by the tsunami tragedy. But, little emphasis has been placed on coordinating first responder activities with Mexico for disasters closer to home.

Engaging Mexican first responders would strengthen a common response to disasters that affect border areas. Creating a common continental response plan would give planners more resources and capabilities to call upon to respond to emergencies. Hemispheric plans for bioterrorism attacks could be developed to include the stockpiling and distribution of inoculants. Disease from a bioterrorist attack knows no geographic boundaries. The interaction and flow of people across our southern border would undoubtedly help spread sickness from bioterrorism.

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<sup>98</sup> Government of Canada, “BPG: Who We Are,” [www.canadianally.com/ca/nasec/bnpg-en.asp](http://www.canadianally.com/ca/nasec/bnpg-en.asp).

<sup>99</sup> U.S. Embassy in Mexico City (press release, 8 January 2005), <http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov/releases/ep050110Tsunami.html>.

Having a coordinated health response plan in place would limit the spread of disease and benefit the entire continent. Including Mexico in disaster preparedness preparations would strengthen the weakest continental link.

**6. Establish more liaisons links, to include exchange positions at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.**

Establishing more liaison links with Mexico will help establish a counterpart dialogue between parallel bureaucratic structures in all three countries. This will facilitate security collaboration and quicken/strengthen response to crises in support of civil authorities. In addition to inviting Mexican participation in NORAD's Bi-National Planning Group, establishing links and exchange positions at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security would broaden links beyond the military. Exchange positions should not be limited to policy positions and should include operators at the *action officer* (i.e., planner and operator) level. Another potential exchange position could be established at the Headquarters Air Force, Directorate for Homeland Security (AF/XOH). Both formal and informal networks from these exchanges will help identify and overcome bureaucratic communication challenges.

**7. Extend an offer to train Mexican pilots in the United States.**

The United States should extend an offer to the Mexican Air Force to train a select number of its aircrew. Despite operating successful training programs with countries as diverse as Taiwan and Saudi Arabia, no Mexican pilots are currently training in the United States. Standardized training helps cut through cultural issues to produce a more uniform aircrew product. At the end of a standardized training program, aircrew are able to work together regardless of nationality. Training Mexican Air Force officers in the United States would

improve at least a select few pilots' English language proficiency and expose them to U.S. standard operating procedures. The goal for providing Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training to Mexican pilots would be to establish a core group of Mexican instructors that could disseminate knowledge of U.S. operating procedures. The desired result would be to develop at least baseline interoperability with U.S. pilots.

Training foreign aircrew in the United States has proved quite effective to address interoperability issues. For example, thirteen NATO nations participate in the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training program (ENJJPT) at Shepard AFB, TX.<sup>100</sup> So far, 3,800 pilots have graduated from the program. The ENJJPT program has grown into more than just a U.S. program to teach its allies to fly. “Just half of the wing’s 250 instructor pilots — and half of the students — are American.”<sup>101</sup> In an interview, the commander of the 80<sup>th</sup> Training Wing noted, “It’s not the United States training NATO members. For instance, it’s not unusual to have a Greek instructor training a Danish student. Our program — our wing — is entirely multinational and takes advantage of leadership styles from all the participating nations.”<sup>102</sup> This joint training has proved “invaluable in multinational operations like Allied Force or Northern Watch.”<sup>103</sup> The United States Air Force has developed successful programs for a number of countries, to include such pilots from vastly different cultures (e.g., Taiwanese and Saudi Arabian pilots). No special program would be required to train Mexican pilots. Mexican aircrew could be accommodated within the current undergraduate pilot training structure. Coupling the invitation with a high-level leadership visit to highlight Mexican benefits from participation may prove effective to induce the Mexican Air Force to accept the offer.

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<sup>100</sup> U.S. Air Force *Airman Magazine*, June 1999, <http://www.af.mil/news/airman/0699/euro.htm>.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

The cost of advanced jet training is high. If the United States offers to pay for the training, then Mexico may be more apt to accept. Airfield and aircraft expenses involved in training Mexican pilots would involve mostly sunk costs. The only additional costs the United States would have to bear are the marginal operating costs of student sorties. Students in the advanced stages of training fly the T-38 Talon, which is same basic airframe as Mexico's most advanced fighter, the F-5. Three pilots training in the United States (approximately 250 hours / year each) would receive more flight time than the entire squadron of Mexico's elite pilots flying their fleet of 10 aircraft.

The Mexican Air Force would enjoy tremendous cost and experience benefits from participating in a program that trains select pilots in the United States. The Mexican Air Force isn't necessarily adverse to the idea of sending officers north for assignments. For example, a Mexican exchange officer is currently assigned as a language instructor at the United States Air Force Academy. In general, the goal should be to establish mil-to-mil programs that increase communication, improve training, and allow for an exchange of ideas to develop a collaborative working relationship.

## **8. Expand cooperation in naval operations and establish joint exercises.**

NORAD should capitalize on successful U.S. Coast Guard efforts with the Mexican navy to reduce drug smuggling. "The Coast Guard coordinates interdiction operations with the Mexican Navy on a regular basis."<sup>104</sup> The Coast Guard established a communications plan with the Mexican Navy to "exchange force locator and other information between operational commands."<sup>105</sup> Since then, coordinated operations between the Coast Guard and Mexican Navy

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<sup>104</sup> Statement of Admiral James Loy, U.S. Coast Guard, in Senate, *Caucus on International Narcotics Control*, 24 February 1999, <http://testimony.ost.dot.gov/test/pasttest/99test/Loy3.htm>.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

have “significantly enhanced interdiction results.”<sup>106</sup> This positive interaction between the Coast Guard and the Mexican Navy can be expanded to establish joint naval exercises.

Establishing joint naval operations with Mexico would mirror efforts the United States is making with Canada to expand NORAD operations to include the maritime domain. Given his background, Navy Admiral Michael T. Keating, the new USNORTHCOM / NORAD commander, should have a natural proclivity to emphasize maritime operations. Admiral Keating could build on Coast Guard efforts to “take the initiative to generate functional relationships with the Mexican Navy for maritime interdiction.”<sup>107</sup>

The Mexican Navy does not face the same constitutional restrictions operating outside its border as SEDENA. Cooperation on the open seas may be more politically palatable and easier to coordinate than exercises coordinating large troop numbers.

## **9. Coordinate for more over-flights of Mexican airspace**

Increasing the frequency of over-flights to monitor border areas and help drug interdiction is another potential area that may be less visible and hence, less likely to cause political angst.

The Mexican government has been more willing to approve over-flights when they have benefited from the information directly. For example, American AWACS crews provided direct support to the Mexican government to provide robust radar coverage of a national security event last year. Surveillance aircraft are not armed, so the perceived threat to national security and national sovereignty is less than fighter aircraft crossing the border. The United States can also use non-military assets as surveillance surrogates, while still providing effective coverage to the appropriate military command and control centers. Drug enforcement aircraft currently flying

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

from U.S. territory have Mexican registration and Mexican personnel on board to facilitate access to Mexican airspace.

Allowing Mexico to fly their recently purchased EMB-145 airborne early warning platforms and/or their E-2 Hawkeye aircraft north of the border would improve trust and open the door for routine over-flight approval. The source of the information should not be an issue for U.S. authorities. If Mexican platforms can provide, supplement, or strengthen coverage, then NORAD should use that information. Improving the quality of NORAD's information, not arguing over who provides it should be a priority. Eventually, the goal should be to integrate these aircraft into our networks (such as Link 16).

#### **10. Negotiate a new over-flight agreement**

Periodically, the U.S. Congress revisits the idea of an improved agreement. For example, a 1999 House Joint Resolution called for “assurances from the Government of Mexico that the Government is making substantial progress in securing aircraft over-flight and refueling rights.”<sup>108</sup> Despite this mandate, the United States has not actively engaged Mexico to update the over-flight agreement.

The United States should also seek to negotiate a new over-flight agreement with Mexico to quicken response speed and reduce operating restrictions. Signed in 1997, the over-flight agreement in effect requires requests be in writing and with a minimum of 24 hours notice. Any route change also requires additional approval. Pre-programmed routes may be adequate for broad area coverage, but are not sufficient for dynamic chases or for monitoring a reactive threat. The current agreement contains the following restriction: “Under no circumstances shall an over-flight be authorized for the purpose of interception or giving chase to an aircraft believed to

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

be engaged in illicit activities.”<sup>109</sup> This severely hampers surveillance mission effectiveness when tracking specific aircraft. Mexicans interpret this provision more broadly than simply prohibiting *hot pursuits*. For example, aircraft that are monitoring suspect aircraft from a standoff distance are often denied the right to transit Mexican airspace.

One way to reduce processing time is to negotiate to create a U.S. liaison position at SEDENA headquarters. Not necessarily staffed by a military serviceman, this representative could help monitor real-time missions and be in the right place to facilitate more timely over-flight approval. Involving Mexican officers in real-time mission monitoring would empower their decision-makers with critical information and may help push approval authority to a lower level.

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<sup>108</sup> House Joint Resolution 58, “Disapproval of Determination of President Regarding Mexico, House Report 105-020, 1997, [http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/?&db\\_id=cp105&r\\_n=hr020.105&sel=TOC\\_2775&](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/?&db_id=cp105&r_n=hr020.105&sel=TOC_2775&)

<sup>109</sup> Over-flight Agreement with Mexico, 1997 (handout from U.S. Embassy Defense Attaché’s office in Mexico City during February 2005 visit).



## **Chapter 6**

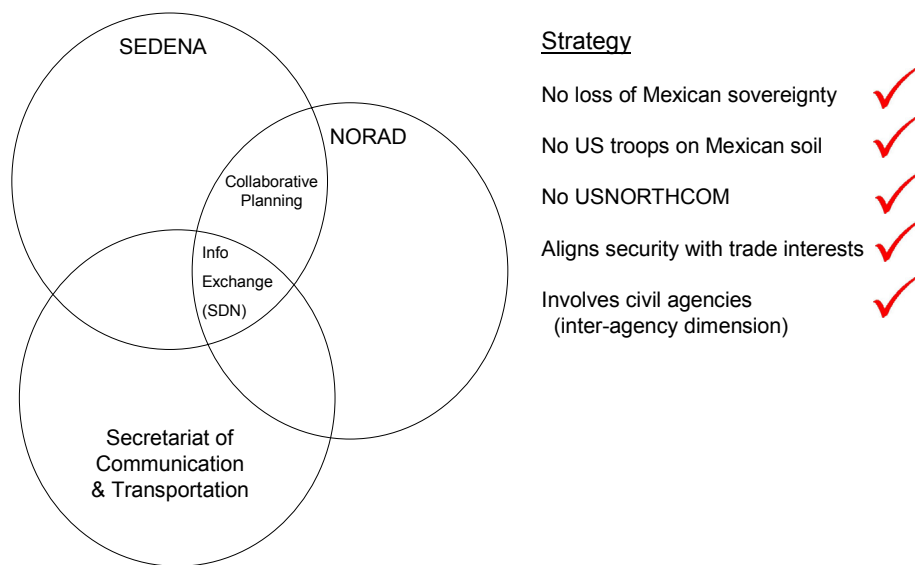
### **The Way Ahead for NORAD**

*Chapter 6 is an expanded discussion of Recommendation 1 in the previous chapter. It details considerations for immediate steps NORAD should pursue to engage Mexico.*

*Geography has made us neighbors. Cooperation and respect will make us partners.*

– President George W. Bush

NORAD can avoid political pitfalls and strengthen North American homeland defense by pursuing initiatives to improve information sharing and collaborative planning while preserving flexibility of action. Figure 1 shows this window of opportunity. Each recommendation advances the U.S. military's ability to support the National Defense Strategy. The strategy leverages economic interests and partners with the Mexican Secretariat of Communication & Transportation to exert more pressure on SEDENA to engage NORAD. Even if SEDENA opts not to participate, NORAD can still pursue the information sharing initiative separately with the Secretariat of Communication & Transportation.



**Figure 1** – A Window of Opportunity to Improve Relations with Mexico

### Information Sharing

In testimony before Congress, General Ralph Eberhart commented, “In our efforts to provide the best possible coverage of North America, we have teamed with the FAA and North

American Air Surveillance Council to further enhance our wide-area surveillance capabilities.”<sup>110</sup> It is now time to team up with Mexico, our neighbors to the south.

NORAD should push to merge Mexican military and civil air traffic radar information into the Surveillance Data Network (SDN) to strengthen NORAD’s common air surveillance picture. Through SDN, Mexico would be able to plug gaps in our air surveillance system. The North American Air Surveillance Plan calls our current system “insufficient.”<sup>111</sup> The Plan identifies a requirement for cooperative and non-cooperative<sup>112</sup> coverage 600 nautical miles beyond the border or coast, from surface to 100,000 feet mean sea level. The system also has to be operational 99.9% of the time. Mexico can certainly contribute overlapping sensors to improve coverage quality and volume to meet this requirement.

SDN is a subset of Network Enabled Operations, a concept FAA officials call “aviation information sharing on steroids.”<sup>113</sup> He predicts Network Enabled Operations will “rock the aviation world.”<sup>114</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report Implementation Act, passed by the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, will accelerate inter-agency information sharing. This legislation mandated a strict timeline and funding to develop a systems architecture that offers decentralized, distributed information sharing. To promote inter-agency information exchange, the legislation was designed to help replace the current *need-to-know* culture of information protection with a *need-to-share* culture of integration. As noted in the National Intelligence Reform Act of 2004, “The effective use of information, from all available sources, is essential to the fight against terror and the protection of our homeland. The biggest impediment to all-source analysis, and to a greater

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<sup>110</sup> House Armed Service Committee Testimony, 13 March 03. General Eberhart was the first NORAD and US Northern Command Commander.

<sup>111</sup> North American Air Surveillance Plan, 2004.

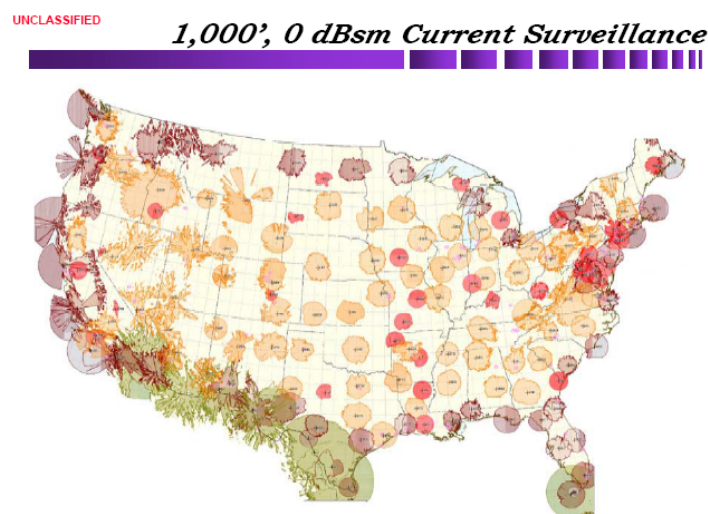
<sup>112</sup> Cooperative coverage requires an aircraft to have a transponder which responds to identification interrogations. Non-cooperative coverage, such as radar, has no such requirement.

<sup>113</sup> Tim Wallace, a Headquarters FAA director, E-mail to author, 10 September 2004.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

likelihood of ‘connecting the dots,’ is resistance to sharing information.”<sup>115</sup> Within a year, the President will submit to Congress a system design and implementation plan for a new network to merge diversely formatted data from all relevant Federal, State, tribal, local, and private sector entities. Once this architecture is in place for inter-agency information sharing, integrating Mexican sources into this common picture should be less complicated.

Including Mexican air traffic radar information in SDN helps satisfy the post-9/11 need for wide area surveillance. Although vastly improved from pre-9/11 days, NORAD air defense operations centers still rely on a fraction of the available radars – approximately 100 out of 500+ available sensors. The current U.S. surveillance picture (Figure 2)<sup>116</sup> does not extend deep into Mexican airspace.



**Figure 2 – Current Surveillance (does not extend deep into Mexico)**

Including Mexican sensors in the network would provide more coverage, a longer look, and more time to identify, react, and cue a response force to potential aerial threats. An

<sup>115</sup> National Intelligence Reform Act of 2004, September 2004, <http://www.fas.org/irp/news/2004/09/s2845.html>.

<sup>116</sup> Mike Mathis, Director of the Joint Air and Missile Defense Organization, “Emerging Threats and Challenges for Homeland Security” (presentation to National Defense Industrial Association Missile Defense, 2003), [http://proceedings.ndia.org/3310/JTAMDO\\_web\\_presentation.pdf](http://proceedings.ndia.org/3310/JTAMDO_web_presentation.pdf).

international company<sup>117</sup> recently finished revamping the Mexican En Route Radar systems with modern, compatible equipment. Figure 3 shows the radar coverage of some of the upgraded sites.<sup>118</sup>



**Figure 3 – Coverage of Selected Mexican En Route Air Traffic Radars (Not All Inclusive)**

Radar sites that monitor border areas like Tijuana may substitute for some of the coverage gaps created with the impending shutdown of the Tethered Aerostat Radar System. If costs prove prohibitive to integrate all Mexican civil and military radars into SDN, selecting a few choice radars on the border to incorporate into SDN would still provide a significantly increased surveillance capability for NORAD. The objective is to push the defense early warning line further south to give NORAD more time to react to potential threats. In effect, this would give NORAD the ability to monitor more battle space. Additional sensors are only one part of the SDN revolution.

<sup>117</sup> Thales Air Traffic Management has sold over 900 ATC radars to more than 90 countries worldwide in the last 30 years. ([www.thalesatm.com](http://www.thalesatm.com))

<sup>118</sup> Map compiled from source data from Thales Air Traffic Management information and the Jane's Air Traffic Control websites.

SDN also will improve telecommunication and automation. As one FAA official noted, “Technology to integrate [Mexican] information is not an issue.”<sup>119</sup> SDN will convert data into a common, IP-based (Internet-Protocol) format. This will also enable differing levels of data privileges if the U.S. chooses not to disclose selected information. Currently, the FAA “can’t hand off planes automatically”<sup>120</sup> with Mexican control centers. All transfers are either completed manually or terminated at the boundary. Despite English being specified as the international aviation language, some Mexican controllers are more proficient than others. Language barriers persist which slow manual handoffs. Manual transfers are not the best way to pass information and increase FAA and military control center situational awareness. Manual transfers are an inefficient way to handle ever-increasing air traffic between the U.S. and Mexico. For example, total passenger and cargo traffic between Houston and Mexico increased almost 20 percent last year.<sup>121</sup> Including Mexican air traffic information into the SDN architecture would allow automated handoffs between U.S. and Mexican controllers, improving the flow of people and goods. Interfacing SDN primarily with Mexican civil agencies and privatized airport facilities avoids one source of conflict since stationing U.S. troops on Mexican soil is not necessary to export the information.

The Mexican Secretariat of Communication and Transportation, not SEDENA, is responsible for the civilian air traffic system. That department has already demonstrated a willingness to cooperate with the U.S. on information exchange and developed a statistical exchange program with the U.S. Department of Transportation. Also, the lead negotiator to include Mexico in SDN would not be the U.S. Air Force, but rather the Federal Aviation

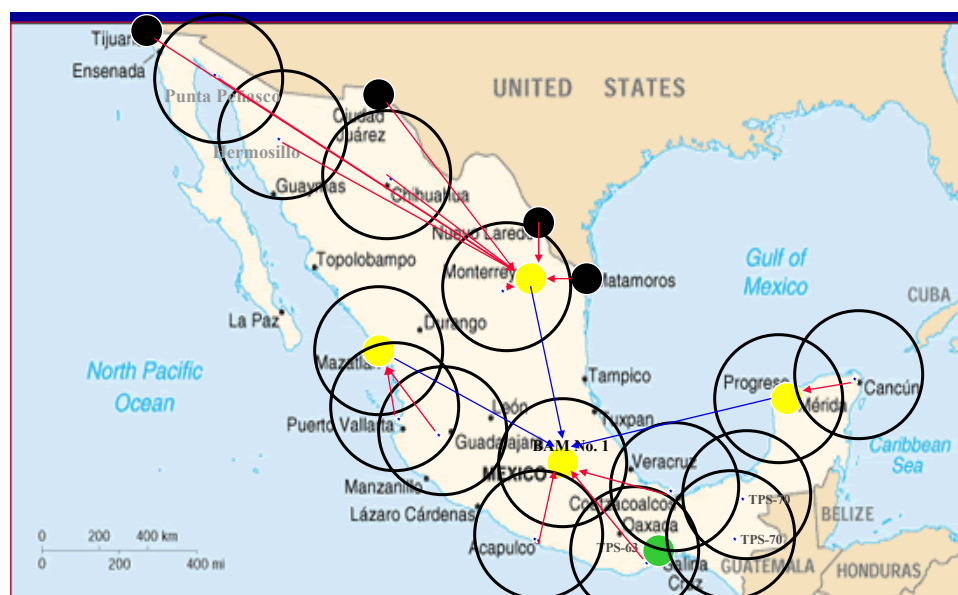
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<sup>119</sup> Tim Wallace, Headquarters FAA, Washington DC, E-mail to author, 10 September 2004.

<sup>120</sup> “NATCA members Work With Mexican Controllers to Preserve Air Safety,” 10 May 2003, <http://www.natca.org/mediacenter/natcaspotlight.msp>.

Administration. The FAA and the Mexican Secretariat of Communications and Transportation are both receptive to any program that advances aviation and transportation commerce. Since the FAA is a civilian agency, working through an FAA negotiator would help shield Mexican mistrust of U.S. defense policy from the negotiating table. The SEDENA establishment would be less likely to object because they would disproportionately benefit from U.S. information sources that strengthen their air surveillance picture within their borders.

Integrating Mexico into the SDN would complement recent SEDENA efforts to strengthen their domestic air picture. SEDENA established the Sistema Integral de Vigilancia Aerea en Mexico, linking select military radar sites together to relay a fused air picture to their headquarters in Mexico City. Figure 4 shows a depiction of SEDENA's current connectivity and coverage.



**Figure 4 – SEDENA C2 Architecture**<sup>122</sup>

<sup>121</sup> "Air Traffic Continues to Climb at Houston Airports," March 2003, <http://www.houstonairportsystem.org/statistics/?year=2004&month=03>.

<sup>122</sup> "What about Mexico?" (NORTHAF CONR brief, December 2004).

The system links Monterrey, Mazatlan, Mexico City, and Merida military control center. Mexico also purchased three Embraer EMB-145 airborne early warning platforms (Picture 3) for their Fuerza Aerea and several E-2 Hawkeye aircraft for the Navy to supplement their ground-based radar coverage. U.S. embassy officials had positive initial feedback to a proposal to get Embraer and U.S. AWACS crews together to exchange ideas and participate in training sessions. The SEDENA leadership also has tentatively accepted an invitation to visit NORAD's Southeast Air Defense Sector headquarters at Tyndall AFB, Florida this summer. All this activity and interest in strengthening Mexico's domestic air picture bodes well for more robust future cooperation.



**Picture 3 – EMB-145**

Accelerating the integration of Mexican civil and military radars into the SDN would kick start the Regional Airspace Initiative for Latin America. The Chief of Staff, United States Air Force recently directed exploratory action to extend the Regional Airspace Initiative for Eastern Europe our hemisphere. The Eastern European program “succeeded in providing for the merger of air traffic control and air defense information in ways that have benefited the implementing countries and improved stability in the region.”<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Draft Implementation Plan for Phase 1, Part B of the Regional Airspace Initiative for Latin America.



## **Collaborative Planning**

Collaborative planning can be done cheaply and does not necessarily require huge infrastructure expenditures. Even simple synchronization of contingency plans would bring huge synergies in response capabilities.

In addition to benefiting from a common air surveillance picture, the Mexican government would be receptive to efforts to give them a voice in North American aerospace defense planning. Embassy officials acknowledge, Mexico would “strongly consider any initiative that recognizes them as an equal partner in North American security.”<sup>124</sup> Specifically, the U.S. and Canada should invite Mexico to participate in the North American Aerospace Surveillance Council (NAASC) and NORAD’s Bi-national Planning Group (BPG).

Including Mexico in the NAASC will allow a forum to address Mexican air surveillance and air traffic concerns and identify shared requirements to find the best use of existing and future systems. The NAASC provides executive oversight for the implementation of the North American Air Surveillance Plan, continued refinement of air surveillance requirements, and a coordination for operational and policy issues. As a bi-national, interagency coordinating body, the NAASC “makes sense and is ‘good government,’ even in the absence of a formal structure.”<sup>125</sup> Including Mexico in the NAASC would be relatively easy because of its informal working group structure. Since the NAASC is not a U.S. Northern Command body, Mexico would be more willing to participate. Mexican representatives could at least be exposed to U.S. and Canadian air surveillance requirements and think about how to contribute.

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<sup>124</sup> U.S. State Department officials (U.S. Embassy, Mexico City), interviews by author, Mexico City, 10 February 2005. Interviews were conducted in confidentiality, and the names of interviewees are withheld by mutual agreement.

<sup>125</sup> Tim Wallace, “Foundations for the Future” (HQ FAA brief created for the North American Aerospace Surveillance Council, 2003).

Inviting Mexican liaison officers to observe and/or participate in NORAD's BPG would open communications and may lead to the establishment of a coordination mechanism with relevant Mexican and U.S. agencies for air, land, sea, and civil support contingency plans. The focus isn't necessarily to coordinate a U.S. military response with Mexican forces, but rather provide a clearinghouse of information and make visible potential capabilities each nation could request in case of need. For example, Mexicans would be privy to U.S. discussions on a planned inter-agency response to a natural disaster near a border area. Mexican representatives could evaluate planned responses for deficiencies and help synchronize military assistance to civil authorities on each side of the border. Another benefit would be to maintain awareness of emerging situations of shared concern. Lastly, Mexican participation in the BPG would allow an exchange of critical infrastructure priority lists and a comparison of plans to protect shared infrastructure.

Improving information sharing and collaborative planning with Mexico does not limit U.S. freedom of action. The U.S. option for unilateral action is still preserved, while offering the Mexicans more voice in continental defense plans.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Summary**

The vision for a true North American collaborative partnership should be to provide comprehensive, seamless defense for North America across all mission areas and all domains (air, land, seas, and cyber) and when requested, provides military assistance to civil authorities. To achieve that vision the United States needs to take active steps to engage Mexico through progressive cooperation to build trust. We need to establish tri-national planning forums and mechanisms to streamline continental defense and security policy and operations. The key to building a North America partnership is to approach new agreements from a collective perspective, rather than thinking in terms of stove-piped interests of a single country.

North American defense is indivisible. But given current political and interoperability challenges, we recognize defense cooperation will proceed at two speeds. We should pursue a strategy that strengthens defense and security agreements between Canada and the United States while creating the conditions for full Mexican participation in a new partnership.

Mexico can become a valued part of the continental defense team. A short-term strategy that focuses on information sharing and collaborative planning in order to strengthen tri-national institutions and capabilities seems promising.

Increased tri-national cooperation need not translate into a loss of sovereignty. A new defense partnership should give all stakeholders an equal voice in continental security. A new partnership should take a collective approach that not only battles threats on the approaches, but also works to support operations in the homeland and prevent/deter threats in forward regions.

Creating a new security partnership with Mexico is vital to patching the partnership hole in our North American perimeter security.

## Appendix A - Council on Foreign Relations Future of North America Task Force

[www.cfr.org](http://www.cfr.org)

Task Force Press Release –

### Council Joins Leading Canadians and Mexicans to Launch Independent Task Force on the Future of North America

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**Contact: Lisa Shields, Vice President, Communications 212-434-9888 or [lsields@cfr.org](mailto:lsields@cfr.org)**

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*October 15, 2004*--The Council has launched an independent task force on the future of North America to examine regional integration since the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement ten years ago. The task force will identify inadequacies in the current arrangements and suggest opportunities for deeper cooperation on areas of common interest. Unlike other Council-sponsored task forces, which focus primarily on U.S. policy, this initiative includes participants from Canada and Mexico, as well as the United States, and will make policy recommendations for all three countries.

The task force will review five spheres of policy in which greater cooperation may be needed. They are: deepening economic integration; reducing the development gap; harmonizing regulatory policy; enhancing security; and devising better institutions to manage conflicts that inevitably arise from integration and exploit opportunities for collaboration.

The task force is chaired by former Canadian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance **John P. Manley**, former Finance Minister of Mexico **Pedro C. Aspe**, and former Governor of Massachusetts and Assistant Attorney General **William F. Weld**.

Founded in 1921, the **Council on Foreign Relations** is an independent, national membership organization and a nonpartisan center for scholars dedicated to producing and disseminating ideas so that individual and corporate members, as well as policymakers, journalists, students, and interested citizens in the United States and other countries, can better understand the world and the foreign policy choices facing the United States and other governments.

**Building a North American Community:  
Report of the Independent Task Force  
On the Future of North America**

**Making North America Safer**

**Security**

The threat of international terrorism originates, for the most part, outside North America. Our external borders are a critical line of defense against this threat. Any weakness in controlling access to North America from abroad reduces the security of the continent as a whole and exacerbates the pressure to intensify controls on intra-continental movement and traffic, which increases the transaction costs associated with trade and travel within North America.

September 11 highlighted the need for bilateral approaches to border management. In December 2001, Canada and the United States signed the Smart Border Declaration and an associated 30-point Action Plan to secure border infrastructure, facilitate the secure movement of people and goods, and share information. A similar accord, the United States-Mexico Border Partnership Agreement, and 22-point Action Plan, were signed in March 2002. Both agreements included measures to facilitate faster border crossings for pre-approved travelers, develop and promote systems to identify dangerous people and goods, relieve congestion at borders, and revitalize cross-border cooperation mechanisms and information sharing. The three leaders pledged additional measures at their March 2005 summit meeting.

The defense of North America must also consist of a more intense level of cooperation among security personnel of the three countries, both within North America and beyond the physical boundaries of the continent. The Container Security Initiative, for example, launched by the United States in the wake of 9/11, involves the use of intelligence, analysis and inspections of containers not at the border but at a growing number of overseas ports from which goods are shipped. Canada and the U.S. jointly inspected containers in some ports in 2002, and in 2004 Canada agreed to form the first joint container inspection team in Hong Kong. Other teams are planned. The ultimate goal is to provide screening of all containers destined for any port in North America so that once unloaded from ships, containers may cross land borders within the region without the need for further inspections.

**WHAT WE SHOULD DO NOW:**

5. **Establish the goal of a common security perimeter by 2010.** The governments of Canada, Mexico, and the United States should articulate as their long-range goal a common security perimeter for North America. In particular, the three governments should strive toward a situation in which a terrorist trying to penetrate our borders will have an equally hard time doing so, no matter which country he elects to enter first. We believe that these measures should be extended to include a commitment to common approaches

toward international negotiations on the global movement of people, cargo, and vessels. Like free trade a decade ago, a common security perimeter for North America is an ambitious but achievable goal that will require specific policy, statutory, and procedural changes in all three nations.

6. **Develop a North American Border Pass.** The three countries should develop a secure North American Border Pass with biometric identifiers. This document would allow its bearers expedited passage through customs, immigration, and airport security throughout the region. The program would be modeled on the U.S.-Canadian “NEXUS” and the U.S.-Mexican “SENTRI” programs, which provide “smart cards” to allow swifter passage to those who pose no risk. Only those who voluntarily sought and received a security clearance would obtain a Border Pass. The pass would be accepted at all border points within North America, but it would not replace national identity documents or passports.
7. **Develop a unified North American border action plan.** The closing of the borders following the 9/11 attacks awakened all three governments to the need to rethink management of the borders. Intense negotiations produced the bilateral “Smart Borders” agreements. Although the two borders are different, and may in certain instances require policies that need to be implemented at two speeds, cooperation by the three governments in the following areas would lead to a better result than a “dual bilateral” approach. This action plan should include the following elements.
  - Harmonize visa and asylum regulations, including convergence of the list of “visa waiver” countries.
  - Harmonize entry screening and tracking procedures for people, goods, and vessels (including integration of name-based and biometric watch lists).
  - Harmonize exit and export tracking procedures.
  - Fully share data about the exit and entry of foreign nationals.
  - Jointly inspect container traffic entering North American ports, building on the Container Security Initiative.
8. **Expand border infrastructure.** While trade has nearly tripled across both borders, border customs facilities have not increased in numbers or quality since NAFTA. Even if September 11<sup>th</sup> had not occurred, trade would be choked at the border. There have been frequent calls for significant new investment to speed processing along both the Canada-U.S. and U.S.-Mexico borders, but little follow-up. It is time for the three heads of government to examine the options for new facilities on the border and to expedite their construction. In addition to allowing for continued growth in the volume of trans-border traffic, such investments must embed the latest technology, and include facilities and procedures that move as much processing as possible away from the border.

## WHAT WE SHOULD DO BY 2010:

### 1. **Lay the groundwork for the freer flow of people within North America.**

The three governments should commit themselves to the long-term goal of dramatically diminishing the need for the current intensity of the governments' physical control of traffic, travel, and trade within North America. A long-term goal for a North American border action plan should be joint screening of travelers from third countries at their first point of entry into North America and the elimination of most controls over the temporary movement of these travelers within North America.

## Law Enforcement and Military Cooperation

Security cooperation of the three countries should also extend to cooperation on counterterrorism and law enforcement, to include the establishment of a trilateral threat intelligence center, the development of trilateral ballistics and explosives registration, and joint training for law enforcement officials.

As founding members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Canada and the United States are close military allies. When Canadian troops hunt terrorists and support democracy in Afghanistan and when Canadian ships lead patrols in the Persian Gulf, they are engaged in the "forward defense" of North America, by attacking the bases of support of international terrorism around the world. Although Mexico is not a NATO member and does not share the same history of military cooperation, it has recently begun to consider closer collaboration on disaster relief and information-sharing about external threats. Defense cooperation therefore must proceed at two speeds towards a common goal. We propose to begin with confidence-building dialogue and information exchanges, moving gradually to further cooperation on issues such as joint threat assessment, peacekeeping operations, and, eventually, an effective defense structure for all of North America across the land, sea, air, and cyberspace.

## WHAT WE SHOULD DO NOW:

1. **Expand NORAD into a multi-service Defense Command.** The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) has for decades been the primary vehicle for expression of the unique defense alliance between Canada and the United States. As recommended in a draft report of the U.S.-Canada Joint Planning Group in October 2004, NORAD should evolve into a multi-service Defense Command that would expand the principle of U.S.-Canadian joint command to land and naval as well as air forces engaged in defending the approaches to North America. In addition, Canada and the United States should reinforce other bilateral defense institutions including the Permanent Joint Board on Defense and Joint Planning Group, and extend an invitation for Mexico to send observers.
2. **Increase information and intelligence sharing at the local and national levels in both law enforcement and military organizations.** Law enforcement cooperation should be expanded from its current levels through the exchange of liaison teams and better use of automated systems for tracking, storing and disseminating timely

intelligence. This should be done immediately. In the area of military cooperation, the collaboration must precede more slowly, especially between U.S. and Mexican militaries. However the ultimate goal needs to be the timely sharing of accurate information and intelligence.

The United States and Canada should invite Mexico to consider more extensive information-sharing and collaborative planning involving military organizations and law enforcement to build mutual trust and pave the way for closer cooperation in the future. Training and exercises should be developed to increase the cooperation and interoperability among and between the law enforcement agencies and militaries. This will provide better capabilities for detection of threats, preventative action, crisis response and consequence management. At least one major trilateral exercise conducted by law enforcement authorities and one by the militaries should be established as a goal over the next year.

In addition to the sharing of information, a Joint Analysis Center should be established immediately to serve as a clearing house for information and development of products for supporting law enforcement and, as appropriate, military requirements.

For its part, Mexico would commit to carrying out a thorough clean up of its borders, a major overhaul of its police forces and judicial branch, as well as an overall transformation of its institutions to end impunity, an inherent component of security. Such a drive would aim to take real control of the country's borders, to minimize illegal flows of people from their countries and to upgrade its migration and customs systems to North American standards.

#### WHAT WE SHOULD DO BY 2010

1. **Conclude a bilateral U.S.-Canada Continental Defense and Security Agreement and create a multi-service North American Defense**

**Command.** As a follow-on and as a longer term measure, this new agreement and command structure would replace NORAD as the primary vehicle for expression of the unique defense alliance between Canada and the United States. Mexican participation in North American military agreements and institutions should be considered if and when Mexico wishes to do so and invests in the necessary military capability.



## Appendix B - Air & Space Power Journal Featured Article



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### Ampliación de la Defensa del Espacio Aéreo Norteamericano (NORAD) Una estrategia de participación para México

**Mayor Lawrence Spinetta, USAF**

*"La geografía nos ha convertido en vecinos —la cooperación y el respeto mutuo nos convertirá en socios".*

*Presidente George W. Bush*

"La primera lección aprendida el 11 de septiembre fue que la NORAD vigilaba de forma errante hacia afuera, cerrando literalmente los ojos a las amenazas desde adentro. Y la primera acción correctiva fue integrar los radares internos de la FAA en el sistema aéreo de la NORAD". Esta transformación desde una institución de la Guerra Fría que apuntaba hacia el norte para combatir la amenaza de los bombarderos y misiles soviéticos, hacia una organización de defensa del territorio patrio no debe terminar con la sola integración de más radares de tráfico aéreo orientados hacia dentro. Nuestro flanco sur con México permanecería relativamente desprotegido. La NORAD debe buscar activamente el desarrollo de una nueva cooperación de seguridad con México para fortalecer la defensa colectiva de América del Norte.

Las realidades de la política actual mexicana y estadounidense liquidarían cualquier plan ambicioso que proponga NORAD, de manera que cualquier asociación de largo plazo tendrá que partir de iniciativas modestas para mejorar la cooperación. Temiendo una pérdida de soberanía, el Congreso Mexicano se opone rotundamente a la Visión 2020 de NORAD, de una estructura de comando trinacional. Estados Unidos tampoco está dispuesto a compartir los costos y la responsabilidad de defender el espacio aéreo mexicano. Para tener éxito, cualquier propuesta para mejorar los acuerdos de seguridad con México tiene que reconocer los límites políticos de la mayor interacción entre militares. A pesar de esto, aún es posible elaborar una estrategia de participación con México que fortalecería de inmediato la defensa de espacio aéreo norteamericano.

Una estrategia de participación que se centre en compartir información y en la planificación en colaboración sería un primer paso en la creación de una nueva asociación de defensa aérea con México. La integración de los radares civiles y militares mexicanos en un sistema aéreo común reduciría las brechas de cobertura identificadas en el Plan de Vigilancia Aérea Norteamericano. Tal como aprendimos el 11 de septiembre, el terrorismo transnacional y otras amenazas a nuestros intereses vitales pueden surgir desde cualquier dirección. La ampliación de nuestra percepción dentro del territorio mexicano cubriría una deficiencia de defensa aérea identificada por NORAD y nos daría más tiempo para detectar, evaluar y enfrentar las amenazas a la seguridad continental desde el sur. La mejora del planeamiento

colaborativo con México fortalecería nuestra capacidad y la de ellos para responder a las amenazas, los desastres naturales y/u otras emergencias. El establecimiento de enlaces con grupos de trabajo de NORAD permitiría que los planificadores estadounidenses comiencen un diálogo directo con sus homólogos mexicanos. Específicamente, dar a México una voz en el Consejo de Vigilancia Aérea Norteamericano y el Grupo de Planificación Binacional fomentaría confianza, mejoraría la defensa continental y abriría las puertas a mejores relaciones.

### **Un agujero en la seguridad del perímetro norteamericano**

La misión de NORAD es proporcionar advertencia y control del espacio aéreo del continente norteamericano, pero se nota la ausencia de la participación mexicana en esa asociación. NORAD sigue siendo exclusivamente una cruzada entre Canadá y Estados Unidos. NORAD tiene aún que consultar o cultivar relaciones con México con el fin de desarrollar una visión común para disuadir, detectar y derrotar las amenazas a nuestro territorio compartido, en parte porque las relaciones entre militares son "distantes". Antes de 1995, las relaciones con los militares mexicanos se describían como "virtualmente inexistentes". En mayo de 1995, el Ministro de Defensa William Perry hizo la primera visita de la historia de un ministro de defensa estadounidense a México. Desde esa visita, México ha incrementado la colaboración de seguridad con los Estados Unidos mediante acuerdos como la Fuerza de Respuesta de la Frontera Norte, el Grupo de Contacto de Alto Nivel y la iniciativa de Bordes Inteligentes. Pero, se ha concentrado la atención en el cumplimiento de la ley en relación al tráfico de drogas. La cooperación entre militares se limita al suministro por parte de Estados Unidos de piezas de repuesto para los antiguos aviones mexicanos. En una entrevista, el director nacional de SAF/IA para México reconoció que, "No se considera en la agenda un aumento de relaciones entre militares con México". Debemos superar la poca convicción en nuestra capacidad para trabajar juntos a fin de enmendar la falta de cooperación en la seguridad de nuestras fronteras norteamericanas.

A diferencia de Canadá, México no comparte una larga tradición en materia de cooperación de defensa con los Estados Unidos, pero ciertamente tiene capacidades valiosas que pueden contribuir a la Defensa del Espacio Aéreo Norteamericano. Los radares comerciales y militares, los aviones de control del tráfico de narcóticos y los datos de Tráfico Aéreo Mexicano, tales como planes de vuelo y manifiestos de tripulaciones y pasajeros, son sólo algunos de los activos y fuentes de información que se pueden usar para reforzar la inteligencia. Además, una mayor cooperación política y militar con México rendiría frutos en las relaciones entre países y ayudaría a solidificar una posición de defensa común del hemisferio. La meta debe ser establecer programas para aumentar la comunicación, adiestramiento e intercambio de ideas con el fin de desarrollar una relación de trabajo colaborativo entre militares. La cooperación estratégica debe "anclarse superponiendo intereses y madurando el respeto".

Estados Unidos y México tienen un interés fundamental de preservar, proteger y fomentar el "libre comercio como el mejor medio para lograr las aspiraciones de desarrollo". La frontera entre Estados Unidos y México es la más concurrida del mundo; cada día más de un millón de personas la cruzan. El Acuerdo de Libre de Comercio Norteamericano dio lugar a un aumento increíble en el comercio con México; actualmente se aproxima a 250 mil millones de dólares americanos al año. Desde que NAFTA entró en vigencia, el comercio con México ha aumentado en más del 300%. En 1999, México superó a Japón en el volumen comercial con Estados Unidos, convirtiéndose en su segundo socio comercial después de Canadá. La infraestructura crítica, particularmente instalaciones tales como puertos que aceleran el flujo de comercio o los embotellamientos en los puntos de cruce de la frontera son objetivos propicios para el terrorismo debido al potencial de causar enorme daño económico. El volumen siempre creciente del tráfico entre los dos países junto con un enemigo que busca activamente maneras de explotar las grietas geográficas aumenta la urgencia de la necesidad de cooperación de defensa del territorio patrio.

El imperativo de seguridad para proteger la infraestructura de fronteras y controlar el inmenso volumen de mercancías y personas que cruzan anualmente la frontera deben superar los obstáculos a la actualización de los acuerdos con México. No obstante, una estrategia exitosa de participación debe reconocer que diferentes actores en la política mexicana tienen diferentes agendas e intereses. Algunas organizaciones, grupos políticos y líderes son más receptivos a la idea de una mayor cooperación en defensa que otros. Por ejemplo, el Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores Mexicano, Luis Ernesto Derbez afirmó que, "la primera prioridad en nuestras relaciones es la lucha contra el terrorismo". Reconociendo que la seguridad es un prerequisite para el comercio, el Presidente Fox trató de iniciar un diálogo de seguridad con los Estados Unidos después del 11 de septiembre, pero encontró fuerte resistencia en el Congreso Mexicano, quienes incluso utilizaron una disposición constitucional para evitar que viajara a Estados Unidos y Canadá e impedir tal discusión. Cualquier iniciativa de NORAD tiene que tener en cuenta las dificultades políticas.

## **La política**

Para tener éxito, una estrategia de participación debe tener en cuenta los intereses políticos mexicanos. Como Canadá, México tiene temor a la pérdida de soberanía y muy poca capacidad presupuestaria para maniobrar con respecto al aumento del gasto de defensa nacional. La consideración militar fundamental para el diseño de nuevas iniciativas es que la política nacional mexicana no permitirá el estacionamiento de tropas estadounidenses en su suelo. Los puntos de vista mexicanos están aún influenciados por la intervención extranjera en México.

Museos en Ciudad México documentan "esqueletos en el closet de Gran Bretaña, España y Estados Unidos." En el Parque de Chapultepec se encuentra un monumento de seis columnas dedicado a los "Niños Héroes" conmemorando a los cadetes que intentaron defender "El Castillo" en contra de una invasión norteamericana durante la guerra entre Estados Unidos y México, 1846-1848. Según la historia, los últimos seis cadetes prefirieron arrojar desde un peñasco envueltos en una bandera mexicana en lugar de rendirse (Fotografía 1). Según se relata en las crónicas del Museo Nacional de las Intervenciones, Estados Unidos conquistó a Veracruz en 1914. Como respuesta a la estatización en 1938 por parte de México de las compañías petroleras, la intervención extranjera "parecía probable", pero las tensiones fueron superadas por el inicio de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Esos monumentos y exhibiciones en el museo no son menospreciativos por su naturaleza, pero sirven como recordatorios de las infracciones por parte de Estados Unidos en la región. "Si bien la mayoría de los ciudadanos estadounidense hace mucho tiempo que olvidaron esos acontecimientos, aún son considerados acontecimientos muy vivos en la historia mexicana." Desde este contexto histórico, se puede comprender el escepticismo mexicano con respecto a la cooperación en materia de defensa con Estados Unidos. "Inclusive hoy en día, el pueblo es muy precavido de que los gringos (palabra en castellano para extranjeros, a menudo reservada para estadounidenses) se vuelvan a aprovechar de ellos. Los mexicanos también son muy cautelosos de perderse en la sombra de sus vecinos del norte y quieren que se les trate con igualdad.

México se sintió desairado cuando el Plan de Comando Unificado 2002 los puso bajo el Comando Norte de los Estados Unidos. Los militares mexicanos percibieron el movimiento como una degradación en importancia y prefieren tratar directamente con la oficina del Ministro de Defensa, como siempre lo han hecho. En su reciente testimonio ante el Congreso Mexicano, el Ministro de Defensa general Clemente Vega García afirmó rotundamente que México no participará en las operaciones o programas del Comando Norte de los Estados Unidos. Además, el general Vega afirmó que el Comando Norte de los Estados Unidos fue creado en respuesta al 11 de septiembre y no tiene nada que ver con México. A primera vista, el testimonio del general Vega parece contradecir la afirmación del Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores Derbez, que combatir el terrorismo es la "prioridad número uno" en las relaciones entre Estados Unidos y México. Pero, las declaraciones del general Vega en realidad intentan encuadrar

su concepción de la participación de los militares mexicanos (es decir, no a través del Comando Norte de los Estados Unidos) en la lucha global contra el terrorismo, y no es necesariamente un rechazo a la cooperación con Estados Unidos. Los comentarios del general Vega reconocen la presión política que ejerce el Congreso Mexicano para evitar cualquier relación de trabajo con el Comando Norte de los Estados Unidos. La cooperación en material de defensa a través de NORAD conserva la capacidad de México de negociar al nivel de Secretario de Defensa o Secretario de Estado, en lugar de a través del Comandante Combatiente del Comando del Norte de Estados Unidos (USNORTHCOM). Para salir airoso, la NORAD tiene que encuadrar su estrategia de participación de una manera que diferencie su organización de la del Comando Norte de los Estados Unidos.

Una forma de diferenciar la NORAD del Comando Norte de los Estados Unidos es invitar a México a participar en foros donde también haya participación canadiense. "La cooperación de seguridad ampliada será más aceptable políticamente en México si se presenta como la cooperación trinacional para la protección contra amenazas externas comunes, más que como la cooperación de defensa bilateral con Estados Unidos". México y Canadá tienen un interés común en no ceder soberanía a los Estados Unidos. Canadá ha estructurado específicamente sus acuerdos internacionales para preservar el comando y control de sus tropas. Ninguna fuerza canadiense quedará bajo el mando del Comando Norte de los Estados Unidos. A pesar de haber combinado todas menos dos funciones de estado mayor, las estructuras de mando del Comando Norte de los Estados Unidos y de NORAD se mantienen separadas y distintas. Dar a México un asiento en la mesa junto a Canadá servirá de mucho para convencer a México de que se le dará una voz igualitaria en la seguridad continental, sin tener que sacrificar el mando de sus propias tropas. Pero, no ofender las sensibilidades políticas mexicanas en asuntos de soberanía es sólo parte de la batalla. Cualquier propuesta tiene también que avanzar los intereses institucionales de la Secretaría de Defensa Nacional (SEDENA), una organización que incluye al Ejército y la Fuerza Aérea de México.

A diferencia de la Marina Mexicana organizada separadamente y que puede navegar fuera de sus fronteras, SEDENA sigue siendo una "institución cerrada" orientada hacia el interior. El centro del poder en SEDENA recae en el liderazgo del Ejército Mexicano. El Ejército "predomina sobre" la Fuerza Aérea y tiene la última palabra en cualquier iniciativa. SEDENA se inclina institucionalmente hacia la acción sólo cuando las amenazas van a tener un impacto directo dentro de las fronteras de México. De hecho, tiene prohibida constitucionalmente la mayoría de formas de despliegue fuera de sus fronteras. El Ejército Mexicano no comparte la misma gran visión de defensa continental de los legisladores estadounidenses que exige una fuerza de reacción robusta y amplia que opere a la perfección a través de las costuras geográficas. Como tal, cualquier propuesta de crear una estructura de comando trinacional integrada es prácticamente imposible. SEDENA no estaría dispuesta a discutir ninguna fusión de comando, ni tampoco es claro si el Ejército y las Fuerzas Aéreas de México pudiesen superar los problemas de interoperabilidad para integrarse en una fuerza trinacional combinada efectiva.

Al considerar las propuestas para que las fuerzas militares trabajen juntas, los temas de interoperabilidad son tan importantes como la política. Barry Cooper, director de la oficina del Instituto Fraser, en Alberta, y profesor de ciencias políticas en la Universidad de Calgary, señala que, "Las realidades técnicas son cuando menos tan importantes como las realidades políticas en lo que respecta a México dentro de NORAD. Canadá está haciendo esfuerzos para mantener la interoperabilidad con las fuerzas estadounidenses. México se encuentra mucho más atrasado que nosotros. Una capacitación adicional de las fuerza mexicanas sería lo más que México puede aspirar". La defensa aérea mexicana tiene muy pocos aviones de caza en operación, y persisten los problemas de mantenimiento. Las tácticas, las técnicas, los procedimientos y el idioma no son compatibles con los de las tripulaciones aéreas estadounidenses o canadienses. A pesar de que está estudiando las opciones para mejoras, la fuerza mexicana de aviones de combate en 2da actualidad consta de solamente 10 F-5 y 8 T-33. Los problemas de mantenimiento continúan. Por ejemplo, en 1998 México no pudo volar ninguno de sus F-5. El tiempo de vuelo total de los F-5 raramente supera las 60 horas por mes. Dadas sus capacidades actuales, poner a

la fuerza de cazas mexicanos bajo una relación de comando y control de NORAD no añadiría mucho valor, y esa opción no sería políticamente viable. Pero, las fuentes mexicanas de datos e inteligencia pueden ser invalorable.

A pesar considerarse que tienen una relación "ambivalente" con Estados Unidos en cuanto a la seguridad hemisférica, el gobierno mexicano ha demostrado recientemente voluntad y entusiasmo para mejorar el intercambio de información. El año pasado, los militares mexicanos solicitaron, y se les concedió, acceso a los sistemas de información del clima de la Fuerza Aérea de los Estados Unidos, incluyendo la Red Conjunta de Información del Tiempo Ejército-Fuerza Aérea (JAAWIN) y el Centro de Climatología de Combate de la Fuerza Aérea (AFCCC). Más allá del nivel táctico, el Plan de Seguridad Nacional 2001-2006 del presidente Vicente Fox enfatiza la necesidad de "poseer información suficiente, oportuna y fiable para garantizar la seguridad nacional". Jorge Chabat, un investigador del Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económica (CIDE) en Ciudad de México, concluye que, "Los compromisos de seguridad de México evitarán el uso de las fuerzas armadas y pondrán énfasis en el intercambio de información y la colaboración de inteligencia". Como SEDENA no tiene el monopolio de la información, una estrategia de NORAD que se proponga compartir información conseguirá más socios dentro del gobierno mexicano, será más fructífera en incrementar la cooperación mexicana, y abrirá las puertas para la planificación colaborativa.

### **El camino a seguir**

NORAD puede evitar las dificultades políticas y reforzar la defensa del territorio norteamericano alentando iniciativas que mejoren el intercambio de información y la planificación colaborativa mientras que al mismo tiempo conserva la flexibilidad de acción. La figura 1 muestra esta oportunidad. Cada recomendación mejora la capacidad de los militares estadounidenses para apoyar la Estrategia de Defensa Nacional y aumenta la efectividad, el rendimiento y/o disminuye el riesgo. La estrategia apalanca los intereses económicos y se complementa con la Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes de México para ejercer más presión sobre SEDENA para que participe en NORAD. Incluso si SEDENA optara por no participar, NORAD aún puede perseguir la iniciativa de intercambio de información por separado con la Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes.

<b>SEDENA</b>	<b>SEDENA</b>
<b>NORAD</b>	<b>NORAD</b>
<b>Collaborative Planning</b>	<b>Planeamiento colaborativo</b>
<b>Info Exchange (SDN)</b>	<b>Intercambio de información (SDN)</b>
<b>Secretariat of Communication &amp; Transportation</b>	<b>Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes</b>
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Estrategia</b>
<b>No loss of Mexican sovereignty</b>	<b>No hay pérdida de soberanía mexicana</b>
<b>No US troops on Mexican soil</b>	<b>No hay tropas estadounidenses en suelo mexicano</b>
<b>No USNORTHCOM</b>	<b>No USNORTHCOM</b>
<b>Aligns security with trade interests</b>	<b>Alinea la seguridad con los intereses comerciales</b>
<b>Involves civil agencies (inter-agency dimension)</b>	<b>Incluye agencias civiles (dimensión inter-agencias)</b>

Figura 1. Una oportunidad para mejorar las relaciones con México

### **Intercambio de información**

En testimonio ante el Congreso, el general Ralph Eberhart comentó, "En nuestros esfuerzos para proporcionar la mejor cobertura posible de América del Norte, nos hemos asociado con la FAA y el Consejo de Vigilancia Aérea Norteamericano para mejorar más nuestras capacidades de vigilancia de área amplia." Este es el momento de asociarnos con México, nuestros vecinos olvidados del sur.

NORAD debe tratar de combinar la información de los radares de tráfico aéreo civil y militar mexicanos con la Red de Datos de Vigilancia (SDN) para fortalecer el panorama de vigilancia de aires comunes de NORAD. Mediante SDN, México podría cubrir las brechas de nuestro sistema de vigilancia aérea. El Plan de Vigilancia Aérea Norteamericano considera que nuestro sistema actual es "insuficiente". El Plan identifica un requisito de cobertura cooperativa y no cooperativa de 600 millas náuticas más allá de la frontera o costa, desde la superficie hasta un nivel marino medio de 100.000 pies. El sistema también tiene que estar funcionando el 99,9% del tiempo. Con toda seguridad México puede contribuir superponiendo sensores para mejorar la calidad y el volumen de la cobertura para cumplir este requisito.

SDN es un subconjunto de las Operaciones Facilitadas por la Red, un concepto que los funcionarios de la FAA le llaman "compartir información de aviación haciendo uso de esteroides." Ellos predicen que las Operaciones Facilitadas por la Red "revolucionarán el mundo de la aviación". La Ley de Implementación del Informe de la Comisión del 9/11 acelerará el intercambio de información entre los organismos. En esta ley se estipula un plazo de tiempo y financiamiento estrictos para diseñar una arquitectura de sistemas que ofrece un intercambio de información descentralizado y distribuido. La ley está concebida para reemplazar la cultura vigente de protección de información de "necesidad de saber" con una cultura de integración de "necesidad de compartir". Además, la ley destaca que, "El uso eficaz de información, desde todas las fuentes disponibles, es esencial para la lucha contra el terror y la protección de nuestra nación. El mayor impedimento al análisis de todas las fuentes, y más probablemente 'alcanzar la meta' es la resistencia a compartir información. El Presidente le someterá al

Congreso un diseño del sistema y un plan de implementación para la red para unir datos estructurados diversamente de todas entidades relevantes del sector Federal, Estatal, de tribu, local y privado. Una vez que esta arquitectura esté lista para el intercambio de información entre los organismos, será menos complicado integrar fuentes mexicanas a este panorama común.

La inclusión de la información de radar de tráfico aéreo mexicano en SDN ayuda a satisfacer la necesidad de vigilancia de área amplia post- 11 de septiembre. Aunque ampliamente mejorada con relación a pre- 11 de septiembre, los centros de operaciones de defensa aérea de NORAD aún dependen de una fracción de los radares disponibles: aproximadamente 100 de los más de 500 sensores disponibles. La inclusión de los sensores mexicanos en la red proporcionaría más cobertura, un horizonte más amplio y más tiempo para identificar, reaccionar y disponer de una fuerza de respuesta a las potenciales amenazas aéreas. Recientemente una empresa internacional finalizó la reforma de los sistemas de radares mexicanos "En Route" utilizando equipos modernos y compatibles. La Figura 2 muestra la cobertura de radar de algunos de los emplazamientos modernizados. Los emplazamientos de radar que vigilan las áreas fronterizas como Tijuana pueden sustituir algunas de las brechas de cobertura creadas con la inminente desarticulación del Sistema de Radar Enlazado Aerostat. Si el costo para integrar los radares civiles y militares mexicanos en SDN resultara prohibitivo, la selección de unos cuantos radares de frontera para SDN aún proporcionaría a NORAD una capacidad de vigilancia aérea bastante mejorada. El objetivo es empujar la línea de advertencia de defensa anticipada más hacia el sur con el fin de dar a NORAD más tiempo para reaccionar a las amenazas potenciales. En efecto, esto daría a NORAD la capacidad de vigilar más "espacio de batalla". Los sensores adicionales son sólo una parte de la revolución SDN.



Figura 2. Cobertura de radares de tráfico aéreo seleccionados mexicanos "En Route" (no incluye todo)

SDN también mejorará la telecomunicación y la automatización. Como indicó un oficial de la FAA, "La tecnología para integrar la información [mexicana] no es un problema". SDN convertirá los datos a un formato común basado en IP (Protocolo Internet). Esto también habilitará niveles diferentes de privilegios de datos en caso de que Estados Unidos elija no revelar ciertas informaciones. Actualmente la FAA "no puede transferir automáticamente aviones" con los centros de control mexicanos. Todas las transferencias se completan manualmente o se terminan en la frontera. A pesar de que el inglés es el idioma de la aviación internacional, algunos controladores mexicanos son más competentes que otros, persisten las barreras del idioma y se retrasan las transferencias manuales. Las transferencias manuales

no son la mejor manera de pasar información ni de incrementar la percepción de situación de la FAA y del centro de control militar. Las transferencias manuales son una forma ineficaz de manejar el tráfico aéreo cada vez mayor entre Estados Unidos y México. Por ejemplo, el tráfico total de pasajeros y carga entre Houston y México ha aumentado casi el 20 por ciento en lo que va del año. La inclusión de la información de tráfico aéreo mexicano en la arquitectura de SDN permitiría las transferencias automatizadas entre los controladores mexicanos y estadounidenses, mejorando el flujo de personas y mercancías. Interconectando a SDN principalmente con las agencias civiles y las instalaciones de aeropuertos privatizadas de México evita una fuente de conflicto ya que no es necesario estacionar tropas estadounidenses en suelo mexicano para exportar la información.

La Secretaría de Comunicación y Transportes de México, no SEDENA, es responsable del sistema de tráfico aéreo civil. Ese departamento ha demostrado su voluntad de cooperar en cuando a intercambio de información y ha desarrollado un programa de intercambio estadístico con el Departamento de Transportes de los Estados Unidos. Asimismo, el negociador principal para incluir a México en SDN no sería la Fuerza Aérea de los Estados Unidos, sino la Administración de Aviación Federal. La FAA y la Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes de México han mostrado receptividad a cualquier programa que avance la aviación y el transporte comercial. Como la FAA es una agencia civil, trabajar mediante un negociador de la FAA ayudaría a alejar de la mesa de negociaciones la desconfianza mexicana en la política de defensa de los Estados Unidos. La dirección de SEDENA pondría menos objeciones porque ellos se beneficiarían muchísimo de las fuentes de información estadounidenses que fortalecen el sistema de vigilancia aérea dentro de sus fronteras.

Integrar a México en el SDN complementaría los intentos recientes de SEDENA de fortalecer su panorama aéreo nacional. SEDENA estableció el Sistema Integral de Vigilancia Aérea en México, enlazando emplazamientos de radares militares exclusivos para retransmitir un panorama aéreo integrado a su cuartel general en Ciudad México. México compró tres plataformas aerotransportadas de aviso temprano Embraer EMB 145 para su Fuerza Aérea y varios aviones Hawkeye E-2 para su Armada para complementar su cobertura de radares basados en tierra. La respuesta inicial de funcionarios de la Embajada de Estados Unidos en cuanto a lograr que tripulaciones de Embraer y de los AWACS estadounidenses intercambiaran ideas y participaran en sesiones de adiestramiento fue positiva. SEDENA aceptó ayuda especial e información por parte de los AWACS estadounidenses en apoyo a una seguridad nacional inclusive el año pasado. Los líderes de SEDENA también han aceptado tentativamente visitar este verano el cuartel general del Sector Sudeste de Defensa Aérea de NORAD en la Base Aérea Tyndall, Florida. Toda esta actividad e interés en fortalecer el panorama aéreo interno de México es un buen presagio para una cooperación más sólida en el futuro.

### **Planeamiento colaborativo**

Además de beneficiarse de un sistema de vigilancia aérea común, el gobierno mexicano vería con buenos ojos los esfuerzos para darles voz en el planeamiento de la defensa del espacio aéreo norteamericano. Los oficiales de la embajada reconocen que México "consideraría seriamente cualquier iniciativa que los reconozca como socios iguales en la seguridad de América del Norte". Específicamente, Estados Unidos y Canadá deberían invitar a México a participar en el Consejo de Vigilancia del Espacio Aéreo Norteamericano (NAASC) y en el Grupo de Planeamiento Binacional (GPG) de la NORAD.

Incluir a México en NAASC permitiría un foro para tratar los intereses mexicanos sobre vigilancia y tráfico aéreos, e identificar los requisitos compartidos para encontrar el mejor uso de los sistemas existentes y futuros. El NAASC proporciona supervisión ejecutiva para la implementación del Plan de Vigilancia del Espacio Aéreo Norteamericano, refinamiento continuo de los requisitos de vigilancia aérea y coordinación de los asuntos operativos y de política. Como cuerpo coordinador binacional entre



agencias, el NAASC "tiene sentido y representa 'buen gobierno', incluso en ausencia de una estructura formal". Incluir a México en el NAASC sería relativamente fácil debido a su estructura de grupo de trabajo informal. Como el NAASC no es un organismo del Comando Norte de los Estados Unidos, México estaría más dispuesto a participar. Cómo mínimo los representantes mexicanos quedarían expuestos a los requisitos de vigilancia aérea de Estados Unidos y Canadá, y podrían pensar en cómo contribuir.

Invitar a oficiales de enlace mexicanos para que observen y/o participen en el BGP de la NORAD abriría las comunicaciones y podría dar lugar al establecimiento de un mecanismo de coordinación con las agencias pertinentes (mexicanas y estadounidenses) para los planes de contingencia aéreo, terrestre, marítimo y de apoyo civil. No necesariamente se intenta coordinar una respuesta militar estadounidense con fuerzas mexicanas, sino más bien proporcionar un centro de intercambio de información y dar visibilidad a las capacidades potenciales que cada nación puede solicitar en caso de necesidad. Por ejemplo, los mexicanos estarían al tanto de las discusiones estadounidenses sobre una respuesta inter-agencias planeada ante un desastre natural cerca de un área fronteriza. Los representantes mexicanos podrían evaluar si las respuestas planeadas tienen deficiencias y ayudar a sincronizar la asistencia militar a las autoridades civiles en ambos lados de la frontera. Otro beneficio sería mantenerse informados de las situaciones emergentes de interés común. Por último, la participación mexicana en el BPG permitiría un intercambio de listas de prioridad de infraestructuras críticas y una comparación de planes para proteger la infraestructura compartida.

### **Flexibilidad de acción**

La mejora del intercambio de información y la planificación colaborativa con México no limitan la libertad de acción de Estados Unidos. Aún se mantiene la opción de acción unilateral, mientras que a la vez se ofrece a los mexicanos más influencia en los planes de defensa continental.

México es una parte interesada en la seguridad de América del Norte y la NORAD debe asegurar que se tengan en cuenta sus intereses. México puede convertirse en una parte valiosa del equipo de defensa continental. La meta debe ser coordinar mejor la política y las operaciones de defensa continental con México para crear las condiciones para la participación plena de México en una nueva relación de socios.

La seguridad de América del Norte es indivisible. NORAD debe buscar una estrategia de participación con México para crear una verdadera relación de socios en la Seguridad de América del Norte.

*Reference the journal for footnote citations.*